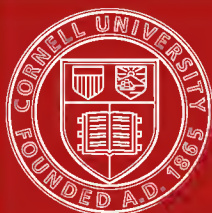


SOUTH AFRICA AS IT IS

F. REGINALD STATHAM



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SOUTH AFRICA AS IT IS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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SOUTH AFRICA

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AS IT IS

BY

F. REGINALD STATHAM

AUTHOR OF "BLACKS, BOERS, AND BRITISH"

LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1897

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SOUTH AFRICA AS IT IS.



INTRODUCTORY.

It is an old and approved saying in South African Colonies, that no High Commissioner—the functionary who, in the highest sense, represents the British Government—can acquire an independent knowledge of the country in which he is so important a factor in less than three years.

That is an old and approved saying. Yet a High Commissioner has opportunities for acquiring information which are, as a rule, far in excess of those afforded to the ordinary and casual visitor. In his capacity as Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, a Colony which has for twenty-five years past enjoyed the advantages of a popular constitution, the High Commissioner is perforce brought into daily and intimate contact with the practical life and political working of at least the largest of the South African communities. The intermingling, through parliamentary representation, of English, Dutch, and native elements is a matter that comes constantly under his notice, while his experience, gathered, as has usually been the case, in other self-governing communities, is calculated to enable him

to understand more readily than most persons the real value of any popular movements. Owing to his former experience, as well as to his general training, no High Commissioner who ever held office in South Africa was better fitted for the position than Lord Rosmead, who, under the more familiar name of Sir Hercules Robinson, represented the British Government in Capetown during the eight years that followed on the retrocession of the Transvaal. Yet, in 1884, after he had held the office of High Commissioner for three years, Sir Hercules Robinson mistook for a genuine popular movement a mere sectional agitation, and on the strength of that mistake gave to the Warren expedition a sanction and support which, but for his mistake, he would certainly have greatly modified.

If the task of acquiring an accurate knowledge of South Africa—of its people and its politics—is difficult for an official enjoying such exceptional advantages, how much more difficult it must be for the ordinary traveller, who manages perhaps to spend four months of a parliamentary vacation in making what is called “a trip to the Cape.” It is sometimes said that the improved means of communication, the increased speed of mail-steamers, and the extension of railways, promote the acquirement of a practical knowledge of South Africa and its affairs. In a certain sense that may be true, for the conveniences of travel always promote travelling. But, on the other hand, these increased conveniences of travel in a far larger degree tend to render the study of the country more difficult. It is as if a man, driving in his carriage across a bridge, should claim from that experience to be possessed of a knowledge of what is at the bottom of the river. If he had been

compelled to ford the river on foot or on horseback, his knowledge of the river-bed would be much more likely to be accurate, even though at the expense of his personal convenience. So it is with the traveller in South Africa. When the means of travelling were slow and inconvenient, travellers were few, it is true, but the knowledge they acquired of the country was fairly extensive and fairly accurate. They came in contact with all sorts and conditions of men, as well as with all sorts and conditions of social or political organisation. The traveller who now covers in three days a distance which ten or twenty years ago would not have been covered in less than three months, is disabled from gaining any but the most superficial view of the country. The result is that whereas twenty years ago there might be one South African traveller who was fairly well informed, there will now be twenty or thirty who are not only ill-informed, but, which is worse, altogether mis-informed.

The difficulty of acquiring an accurate knowledge of the country is rendered all the greater by the antagonism of sentiment provoked by the unfortunate and unnecessary antagonism of races which was stirred up nearly twenty years ago. The average Englishman fails altogether to realise the depth of the impression left in South Africa by the "forward" policy of the Beaconsfield Administration—a policy most signally expressed in South Africa by the annexation of the Transvaal. So far as the Dutch population of South Africa is concerned, it is difficult to realise the depth of this impression unless the visitor has the opportunity of coming into friendly contact with the Dutch occupants of the farmhouses scattered through the Cape Colony, the Free State,

the Transvaal, and Natal. The English aspect of this antagonism can be studied from the moment the mail-steamer leaves Southampton. British seamen are mostly Conservatives, and if the skipper (as may very well be the case) happens to be an officer of the Naval Reserve, he is not long, when once Madeira is passed, in finding sympathisers for his views about "the Boers." He is cautious and quiet, however, and will never commit himself to the strength of denunciation which finds nightly expression in the smoking-room. The passenger who holds opinions of his own on such matters finds it best, for his own quietude and comfort, to keep them to himself. The experience of the mail-steamer is a fairly good preparation for the experience of the hotel to which the traveller resorts on landing, and of the journey up-country by rail. The Englishman is essentially the travelling unit of the South African population, and where the Englishman comes, Englishmen are to be found. Hence to the average and ordinary traveller everything that he sees and hears while in South Africa tends to confirm the impression which he obtained during the voyage, and acts as a bar to his obtaining any impressions of a different kind.

The general result is much the same if the visitor happens to be a man of some distinction and consideration—a member of the House of Commons, for example, or even an ex-Cabinet Minister. Such a traveller knows pretty well what value to place on the vapourings of the mail-steamer's smoking-room, and will not improbably, if he is a Liberal, do something to correct the milder animosity of the skipper. On touching South African soil he will be on the alert, and it is more than probable that his position

and introductions will secure for him the *entrée* of the Civil Service Club in Capetown—the Club where members of past and present Cape Ministries enjoy the luxury of believing that they direct the destinies of South Africa. That is surely, one would think, the place in which to pick up correct political notions and impressions. There is no one to warn him that the whole atmosphere, that the very walls of that dignified institution are absolutely saturated with the same spirit of antiquated conservatism which broods over some small cathedral town in the English Midlands ; that the capacity for forming or holding liberal ideas of Government is conspicuous by its absence ; and that even those who assume the position of political leaders are often hopelessly ignorant of the true condition of political matters beyond the boundary of the Cape Colony. There is no one to make him understand that, notwithstanding its historical associations, Capetown is absolutely repudiated as a South African capital from every quarter but Capetown itself. And wherever he goes, in whatever business centre he happens to linger, the same fate awaits him. The very distinction of his position brings him into contact with just those people who can tell him nothing, and whose endeavour it is—an unconscious endeavour no doubt in many cases—to confirm the impressions with which he started. He cannot be aware that the hospitable Club at Kimberley is practically a De Beers institution. There is no one to remind him at Bloemfontein that the presence of a considerable English element is an accident of commercial concentration. When he sits in the Rand Club at Johannesburg he fails to realise that its members hardly represent the general mass of

Uitlanders more than the French colony round Leicester Square represents London. And even in Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal itself, he never suspects that the gentlemen who invite him to a banquet are more than anything else bent upon convincing him of the innate wickedness of *Hollanders*.

And yet there is so much to be seen, so much to be known, in this country which has so suddenly emerged from unmerited neglect into perhaps a somewhat dangerous popularity. There is so much to be seen, there is so much to be known, and yet it is so difficult for the casual traveller, let his capacity be what it may, to get hold of the clue to a labyrinth which is well worth exploring, and which, after all, is by no means intricate. It is not with any assumption of the possession of exclusive knowledge that these pages are projected. Yet it is surely not unreasonable to claim that a twenty years' daily contact with the political and social life of South Africa in almost all its centres—such an intimate contact as the “daily wrangle” of journalism affords—added to a personal acquaintance with the great majority of leading figures in the panorama of political life, may be regarded as constituting some title to be heard. It may perhaps be regarded as a further slight justification for the present attempt that the writer has on a former occasion¹ endeavoured, not without some appreciation, to throw what light he could on a problem which is really not nearly so difficult or intricate as it has become the fashion to believe. So far as the principles insisted on in that former attempt are concerned they may be regarded as holding true to this day. So much has happened,

¹ “Blacks, Boers, and British,” Macmillan & Co., 1881.

however, within the last ten years that the South African problem has assumed in some respects a new aspect, and one which may be dealt with in the light of the new forces that have come into operation. Twenty years is a long time in the life of a new country, and it may fairly be said that the changes that have been apparent in the latter half of that period of twenty years far eclipse in material importance those of the former half. And yet it may be that the key to the situation, as it now exists, is to be found, not in the ten years of mineral exploitation which are immediately behind us, but in the ten years of political and national growth which commenced in 1877.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRANSVAAL ANNEXATION.

LATE on the evening of Wednesday, the 18th of April, 1877, the steamer *Caldera*, which had been temporarily chartered by the Castle Packets Company as a mail-boat, dropped anchor in Table Bay. When the port-boat came alongside, in response to the usual inquiries for news, the answer was passed up—"The Transvaal has been annexed."

That act of annexation had taken place on the 12th of April, six days previously, and the news, sent by special express from Pretoria to Kimberley, had been wired from Kimberley to Capetown. There is some importance attaching to these dates. On the 31st of March the Castle Packets mail-steamer, *Balmoral Castle*, which had sailed from Dartmouth on her first voyage a fortnight before the *Caldera*, had landed the late Sir Bartle Frere at Capetown, to enter on that term of office as Governor and High Commissioner which was so vigorous in its beginning and so disastrous in its end. There have been two theories held with regard to the act of the annexation of the Transvaal. One theory is that it was more or less an accidental blunder committed on the responsibility of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, which, being committed, could not be

undone, but which was an embarrassment to Sir Bartle Frere. The other theory is that the annexation was part and parcel of a settled scheme for the remodelling of the map of South Africa, closely connected with the appointment of Sir Bartle Frere to the highest post of responsibility under the British Government. Those who accept the latter theory have contended that the annexation, planned some time before, only waited for Sir Bartle Frere's arrival to be carried into effect.

What are the probabilities? Undoubtedly they are strongly in favour of the latter theory. The appointment of Sir Bartle Frere to the High Commissionership had been known months before. His name had been coupled, on a public occasion in London at which Cabinet Ministers were present, with a policy of Imperial expansion. When Sir Theophilus Shepstone started from Natal on his special mission to Pretoria towards the close of the preceding year, troops had been moved up, at great expense, from Pietermaritzburg to a point near the Transvaal border—an operation that could not have taken place without express sanction from the War Office. It seems, therefore, difficult to believe that Sir Theophilus Shepstone, when he hoisted the British flag in Pretoria on the 12th of April, 1877, could have been acting save with the highest sanction of and in consultation with the highest representative of British authority then in South Africa, *i.e.*, Sir Bartle Frere. As against this probability, those who are justifiably anxious to relieve Sir Bartle Frere of the odium attaching to this untoward event, have contended that, as the annexation took place on the 12th of April, and Sir Bartle Frere had only landed in Capetown on the 31st of March,

there was not time for him, between those two dates, to have communicated with Sir Theophilus Shepstone. It is unfortunate that the value of this argument is entirely destroyed by the fact that the news of the annexation, occurring on the 12th of April, was known in Capetown on the evening of the 18th, or only six days later.

It seems, then, reasonable to pay attention rather to the probabilities of the case, and the more so by reason of what had gone before and what came after. It is not now to be denied that, with the advent of the Beaconsfield Administration into office, one of the principal articles in the official portmanteau was a scheme of Imperial extension and expansion. How that scheme worked in India there is here no need to say ; though it is distinctly pertinent to the present discussion that the official justification for the movements on the north-western frontier of India was supplied by Sir Bartle Frere, in a memorandum drawn up in 1873. The policy of expansion, so far as Colonial matters were concerned, found a ready sympathiser in the late Lord Carnarvon, who had undertaken the management of Colonial affairs when the Beaconsfield Administration was first formed in 1874. A Colonial Secretary, looking round for some opportunity of adding his contribution to the policy of expansion, found the field before him exceedingly narrow. There was nothing to be done in Canada, which had accepted, with apparent success, the principle of confederation nearly ten years before. The prospect of expansion in Australasia was limited first by the claims of other European Powers in the same region, and next by the sterling and brusque independence of Colonial Ministries and Legislatures. There was, in fact, only

one field for Colonial expansion left open, and that was South Africa.

The simple idea of expansion, however, was conditioned by Lord Carnarvon's former experiences in connection with Colonial affairs. It had been during his previous enjoyment of the same office that the North American Colonies, at their own instance, had agreed to a federated form of government. There was sufficient *éclat* resulting from this event to give a bright and promising aspect to the idea of federation. What had been so successful in Canada—albeit in Canada it was a natural result of previously existing conditions—might be successful in South Africa. One can imagine this idea seizing on a Colonial Secretary with the force of an inspiration. The initial steps were not very long delayed, and, being taken hastily, were marked by an initial blunder. A few years previously, while the Liberals were in office, a popular form of constitution had been accepted by the Cape Colony in lieu of the form known as “representative institutions,” which had come into force under Sir George Grey in 1854. It may have occurred to an enthusiastic Secretary of State in London that in a Colony which had been so short a time in the enjoyment of full constitutional freedom, ministers and parliaments would not be very quick at perceiving or insisting on their constitutional rights. At any rate, owing to whatever combination of causes, an Imperial Commissioner, in the person of the late Professor Froude, was despatched to South Africa in 1875, charged with the duty of submitting to the Governments and Legislatures of both the British Colonies the scheme for a South African Federation.

The despatch of this Imperial Commissioner was

not the only step taken towards paving the way for Lord Carnarvon's coveted success. In the same year advantage was taken of recent native disturbances in Natal to alter the constitution of that Colony in a direction favourable to the projected changes. Lord Wolseley, of whom it may be convenient to speak by the name under which he was then known, was about the same time sent on a special mission to Natal, accompanied by a staff of military officers whose talents have never been disputed. The object of that mission was, indeed, twofold. The constitution of Natal was to be altered; the state of feeling in the two Republics—the Free State and the Transvaal—was to be ascertained. Since the year 1856 Natal had enjoyed a constitution which, though not rising above the level of "representative institutions," was of a very liberal kind. The legislative work of the Colony was entrusted to a council of twenty members, five of whom held official positions and were responsible to the Governor of the Colony, while the remaining fifteen were freely elected by the European population. The colonists thus had the power, which was not unfrequently exercised, of defeating Government measures. To get rid of the possibility of confederation proposals being rejected, it became Sir Garnet Wolseley's duty to persuade the Natal Legislature to assent to the addition of eight members to the Legislative Council, who should not be elected but nominated by the Governor of the day. It will readily be understood that if, in a Legislature of twenty-eight members, a Governor could depend on the votes of five officials and eight nominees, the prospect of securing a majority for Government proposals would be greatly improved. With some

little difficulty, and perhaps by the exercise of a considerable amount of personal pressure, the Natal Legislature was induced to consent to this change. Meantime leading members of Sir Garnet Wolseley's staff had visited the capitals of the Free State and the Transvaal, for the purpose of ascertaining, if possible, the feeling in those States with regard to a general scheme of confederation. In the case of the Transvaal, it is said, the report was favourable ; in the case of the Free State, it was the reverse.

Lord Carnarvon's project, however, met with an unexpected check in Capetown. The head of the Ministry then in office in Capetown was Mr. (subsequently Sir John) Molteno, who, apart from his own natural independence, was accustomed to rely to no small extent on the judgment of Mr. Saul Solomon, a man of exceptional ability and force of character, whose influence in the Cape Parliament almost eclipsed that of the Premier himself. Lord Carnarvon's despatch, coupled as it was with the uninvited appointment of an Imperial Commissioner, was viewed by Mr. Molteno and his supporters as a slight to the constitutional independence of the Colony. If there were to be proposals for confederation, it was contended, they should have been left, so far as the Cape Colony was concerned, to the initiative of the Cape Ministry. On this ground, which it must be admitted has much in its favour, the Molteno Ministry declined to consider the question, and officially ignored the Imperial Commissioner, who, after a tour through Natal and the Free State, left South Africa without having in any respect furthered the cause he was sent to promote. Having failed to secure the co-operation of the Cape Ministry—admittedly a powerful and important factor

in such a question—Lord Carnarvon endeavoured to do without it. The several Governments in South Africa were invited in 1876 to send delegates to a conference to be held in London for the purpose of discussing a confederation policy. It was a foregone conclusion that, after what had happened in 1875, the Cape Ministry would decline the invitation, which was declined also by the Governments of the two Republics. The only South African community which responded to the invitation was Natal, which appointed an official delegate in the person of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and two unofficial delegates, one of whom is now the Premier of the Colony. The conference, which met at the Colonial Office, was a very singular affair. The two unofficial delegates from Natal were practically ignored, and whatever real consultations took place were carried on between Lord Carnarvon, Sir Garnet Wolseley, and Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

The conference, however, was important in this respect—that it was the immediate prelude to the annexation of the Transvaal. If Lord Carnarvon had received the active support and sympathy of the Cape Government, it is quite possible that this step would not have been resolved on. As it was, it must have been plain to those who were officially interested in the matter that the confederation policy would break down unless some special steps were taken to avert such a calamity. It was about this time that the appointment of Sir Bartle Frere to the dual office of Governor of the Cape of Good Hope and High Commissioner for South Africa, with powers far in excess of those enjoyed by any predecessor in those offices, began to be talked of, and it was about the same time that Sir Theophilus

Shepstone, making a somewhat hurried departure from England, was sent on a special mission to the Transvaal, his arrival in Pretoria being accompanied by the moving up of an infantry regiment from Pietermaritzburg to a point near the Transvaal border.

Taking all these facts into consideration, it seems difficult to believe that the hoisting of the British flag in Pretoria on the 12th of April, 1877, had not a close connection with the arrival of Sir Bartle Frere at Capetown on the 31st of the previous month. Sir Bartle Frere was not a man who was accustomed to let the grass grow under his feet ; indeed, before he had been a fortnight in Capetown, he had gained an acquaintance with the municipal and personal affairs of its inhabitants, which caused both surprise and amusement. Meantime, there can be no question that the act of the annexation of the Transvaal, unexpected though it was, was regarded with satisfaction by the great majority of British residents in South Africa, and all the more so because it had been made to appear as though it had been brought about with the consent of a majority of the European inhabitants of the State. Indeed, it seemed to not a few impossible to believe that the thing had come about in any other way. Those who knew to the contrary, and who resented this extinguishing of independence solemnly guaranteed a quarter of a century before—that is to say, the Dutch population of the whole of South Africa—were without means of making their feelings known. Even where they were represented by newspapers published in Dutch, those newspapers were rarely read by Englishmen. There can be no question, too, that the annexation was very much

helped by the weakness and unpopularity of the then President of the Transvaal, Mr. Thomas François Burgers, a man of considerable education and intelligence, but who had come to be singularly out of touch with the great majority of the Transvaal farmers. That the finances of the country were not in a satisfactory state may be admitted ; but they were by no means in so hopeless a condition as has been popularly believed, and would have been in a far better condition had it not been for the pressure purposely exercised by certain financial institutions.

By the great majority of English residents in South Africa, then—the section of the population which most readily found means for giving expression to its views—the annexation was regarded with approval. It appeared to them in the light of a desirable thing well done, and all the better done because it had been done with the assent of those most affected by the change. The official justification, however, took another shape, as began to be seen when the official despatches were studied in blue-books. It then came to be perceived that the whole idea of confederation was officially founded, whether genuinely or not, on a native scare. The doctrine was inculcated that, unless the European populations of South Africa could be bound together by some form of federated government, they were in danger of being obliterated by a general and combined rising of natives. That any single resident in South Africa accepted this idea is not to be believed for a moment. Whether the conviction was genuinely and sincerely held in high official circles in England, or whether it was only officially accepted for a certain purpose, will probably remain an unsolved problem. But those who were ac-

quainted with the country, whether they were British or Dutch by descent, were never under alarm of any kind until, as may be seen later on, alarm began to be created through the continual persistence of officials in indicating danger.

A consideration of the history and the position of the native races of South Africa will serve to show that the alarmist views held in high official places were without justification. To begin with, that general banding together of natives against Europeans, which was the favourite official bugbear, was an impossibility. The European population, it was often urged, lived widely apart. That is true, no doubt, for South Africa is a large country and the European population is not very numerous. But if the Europeans live widely apart, so do natives live widely apart, and they are, moreover, separated by differences of race and by ancient hatreds which are even more difficult to overcome than geographical distances. Zulus would never make common cause with Swazies, and neither Swazies nor Zulus would ever act in concert with Basutos. In the same way neither the Pondos nor the Fingoes would ever enter into a combination with the tribes along the eastern border of the Cape Colony. The same may be said with regard to the native tribes in the northern and north-eastern districts of the Transvaal. They are separated by immense distances from the natives nearer to the coast, and have little in common with each other. Beyond this, there is not a native race of any importance in South Africa that was not thoroughly well beaten years before Lord Carnarvon fell in love with the idea of confederation, and beaten, too, with weapons far inferior to those in more modern use.

The branch of the Zulu race under Mosilikatze was routed, subdued, and driven northward in the very earliest days of Transvaal settlement. The Basutos, in many respects the most formidable of native fighters, were completely defeated by the Free State burghers in 1869. The Pondos had been known as a peaceable and pastoral people for nearly half a century. When trouble has happened during more recent years with any native tribes, it has not been by reason of native invasions, but through the necessity of turning natives out of the fastnesses from which they carried on marauding raids against individual homesteads. That has been the case in the majority of South African wars with natives, and perhaps more especially in the Transvaal. A great deal has been made, by apologists for the Transvaal annexation, of the failure of the Transvaal burgher forces, in 1876, to deal with Sekukuni. What they failed to do was what a British expedition failed to do a year or two later—they failed to turn Sekukuni out of his strongholds among the rugged mountain ranges in the north-east of the Transvaal. But, though they failed to do this, the Republic was in no kind of danger from Sekukuni any more than it was in danger from Mapoch, who till 1883 occupied mountain fastnesses only 150 miles from Pretoria. Again, the operations against the native tribes on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in 1877 and 1878 were operations not to drive the natives back from Colonial territory, but to drive them out of the difficult country in which they had taken refuge.

The case of the Zulus, whose power has been so frequently used as a justification for the annexation of the Transvaal, demands perhaps special consideration. The theory has been put about till it is in

many places accepted as expressing the actual fact that, but for the annexation of the Transvaal by the British Government, that country would have been swept and devastated by the Zulus. There is not the smallest real justification for such a theory, nor was it ever for a moment seriously held by persons practically acquainted with South Africa. The defeat of the whole Zulu power by the emigrant farmers in 1838, at the historic battle of the Blood River, is the oldest of old stories. One of the results of that battle was the dethronement and subsequent assassination of the Zulu chief Dingaan; another result was the installation of Panda, by the victorious Transvaal burghers, as Dingaan's successor. During the thirty-five years of Panda's chieftainship, from 1838 to 1873, the Zulus and the burghers of the South African Republic lived on reasonably good terms, and there cannot be any shadow of doubt that if the Zulus, who still kept up their military organisation, had attempted any invasion of the Transvaal, they would have been dealt with as Dingaan's armies were dealt with in 1838.

It is necessary that this should be understood, because the main official justification both of the Transvaal annexation and its sequel, the Zulu war, has been found in the theory that the Zulu power was a threat to European supremacy in South Africa, and specially to European supremacy in the Transvaal. It may be conceded that there was a certain element of danger in the maintenance of the military system in Zululand, where the traditions of former conquests of the Zulu race—conquests usually of extermination—were still cherished. The Zulus, however, knew very well the limits of their power, especially in any direction in which they

were likely to be brought in contact with the sons of the Dutch settlers who had overthrown both Mosilikatze and Dingaan, and they also had a very shrewd notion that the apparently weak Government in Natal was representative of a vast power across the sea. Beyond this there can be little doubt that Cetywayo, in spite of the bloodthirsty character so often attributed to him, was as sincerely anxious for peace as had been his father Panda. The very request which has been so often quoted as testifying to his ferocious nature is really evidence the other way. That request was for permission for his regiments to "wash their spears" in the blood of their old hereditary enemies the Swazies. The facts that he requested permission, that he did not, as he might easily have done, act without permission when it was withheld, and that he distinctly limited the request to a neighbouring native tribe, are very significant. The reason for the request, properly considered, was even more significant. According to Zulu tradition, a man was not acceptable as a husband until he had proved his worth as a warrior, and it was really the desire of Cetywayo to see his people settling down peaceably that led him to wish for an opportunity of indulging in a little war. The request, from a civilised point of view, was an impossible one; to grant it, even with a sure guarantee that the Swazies only would suffer, would have been a serious danger to the general peace of the country. Nevertheless, the whole circumstances fully justify the conclusion that from the aggressive power of the Zulus, as against Europeans, there was nothing to fear. When their own country was invaded it was a different matter.

Were those who were responsible for the "forward"

policy which Sir Bartle Frere represented, and which was so forcibly expressed in the annexation of the Transvaal, sincere in their professed belief in the existence of a general threat to European civilisation from a combination of native races? That is a question which it would be difficult to answer; but it may at least be said that the presence of this danger had become so much a matter of popular acceptance in England that officials might well have been led at last to believe in the danger which they had themselves first of all exaggerated. The man who has become convinced that "the hobgoblins will have him," inevitably comes to see hobgoblins where none really exist. But whether they sincerely believed in this justification or not, the chief issue remains the same. The Transvaal was annexed in defiance of a settled policy that had been found satisfactory and workable for a quarter of a century; it was annexed in the following out of a scheme of Imperial expansion; it was annexed, as there is much reason for believing, because more moderate plans for furthering this scheme of expansion had fallen through; it was annexed, as has been since freely admitted, contrary to the wishes of the great majority of its population; and it was annexed under a justification which was not genuine and which was at variance with the real facts of the situation.

It is this act of the annexation of the Transvaal—an act that brought after it so bitter a Nemesis—that stands on the front page of the history of South Africa during the last twenty years. Directly or indirectly it is responsible for all the trouble, all the friction, that has since followed; for it stirred up that antagonism between the two dominant

European races which finds its extremest expression on one hand in the smoking-rooms of Cape mail-steamers, and on the other hand in the bitter words that spring to the lips of Dutch farmers in the remoter corners of the great South African table-land. It revived animosities that were dying out, and gave to old stories of oppression a significance that made them new again. All this, however, it was difficult for the majority of British residents and colonists in South Africa to realise at the time. The very novelty and dimensions of the act dazzled them, and disabled them in most cases from investigating as carefully as they might otherwise have done the alleged consent of the majority of the Transvaal population. Beyond this, the natural delight in action, the belief in an impetus to trade, the high reputation of the new representative of the British Empire in South Africa—all these things together helped to blind the majority as to the real nature of the thing that had been done, and induced them to accept it as indicative of a coming tide of prosperity and progress. There were a few men, experienced in the history and the circumstances of the country, who saw the wrong from the first and never ceased to protest against it. There were also without doubt a few who also saw the wrong from the first, but who found in it opportunities for land speculation by which they hoped largely to profit.

There is, however, one thing to be said. The annexation might have had some kind of a success, some chance of being less of a failure, if it had been backed up by steps tending to display a real and living interest in the welfare of the country. The addition to the British Empire of a territory with an area not much less than that of the Kingdom

of Prussia, might surely have been expected to stir up some enthusiasm in the minds of the supporters of a Conservative and adventurous British Cabinet. It might have been thought, too, that a people who, as it was believed, had professed their preference for British rule, deserved to receive some sort of encouragement. Unfortunately the traditional economy of the Treasury stepped in to chill the ardour of the Colonial Office. There was no kind of financial provision made even for the administration of the new province, still less for the execution of any of those public works which are usually regarded as typical of the advent of British rule. It has been stated, and has never been contradicted, that the first expenses of administration came from a loan privately made to the official who, when the British flag was hoisted, published his commission as Administrator. Taxation was not to be thought of; even the collection of taxes which had been authorised under the Republican Government was judiciously suspended. After considerable delay and under strong pressure, the Chancellor of the Exchequer consented to ask the House of Commons to sanction a loan of £100,000, out of which money already expended was paid back, and which served for the necessities of the immediate moment. Meantime the same distrust of the people, the same secret knowledge of their opposition to the annexation, that stood in the way of taxation, stood also in the way of any attempt at the establishment of a representative form of government. It has been contended by those who are interested in the reputation and the work of Sir Theophilus Shepstone that if he had been properly supported his knowledge of the Dutch character and language would

have enabled him to win over the majority of the Dutch population and to establish a workable government on a basis of popular representation. It is only just that due weight should be given to this contention. As it happened, there was no kind of support given to the Administrator who represented the British Government in this latest addition to the Empire. So far from this, there is reason to believe that even his best efforts were hampered by official jealousies proceeding from outside the Transvaal. What his own capacity for administration might be there were no means of knowing. His official life had been passed solely in contact with the affairs of native tribes in and around Natal, and it does not follow that ability in this direction is coupled with the capacity to administer the affairs of a European community. That he was anything but ably seconded, so far as the subordinate heads of departments were concerned, is hardly matter for doubt.

The Dutch population of the country meantime were not idle. The annexation had come as a surprise, but the real feelings of the people were not long in finding expression. During the few months preceding the annexation, while Sir Theophilus Shepstone was in Pretoria in the character of a friendly delegate from the British Government, the people as a whole had been occupied with their usual agricultural pursuits and had not paid much attention to what was passing in the capital. It is more than probable that their interest in political matters was diminished by the unpopularity of President Burgers, who was an object of suspicion quite as much for his advanced religious views as for his financial experiments. When, however, it

was realised that, by a process that seemed hardly comprehensible, the Republic had come under the British flag, there was no hesitation as to the course to be followed. If the Volksraad could have met on its constitutionally fixed date, the first Monday in May, it would have expressed in no measured terms its sense of the situation and its resentment at the wrong that had been done. Owing to the annexation, either the Volksraad was disabled from meeting or it was not deemed expedient to call it together. Acting under the advice of Mr. Kruger, who had been a member of the Executive at the time of the annexation, the Transvaal burghers resolved to believe that the annexation had taken place through an error and a misconception, and that it would be reversed as soon as the British Government was assured that the majority of the burghers were opposed to the step. A memorial to this effect was prepared, and received the signatures, in a comparatively brief space of time, of over six thousand burghers. It was entrusted to the hands of Mr. Kruger and Dr. Jorissen, the legal adviser of the Republican Government, Mr. Kruger thus making his appearance for the first time as the champion of Transvaal independence. Meanwhile, during his absence in England, the burghers waited, leaving the Government in Pretoria very much to itself, and not much troubled by it in return. There was one resolution with which they were inspired—that if ultimately it should become necessary to take up arms to regain their independence, they would cheerfully go into the field, but that not until all the resources of protest and negotiation had been exhausted would they involve the country in bloodshed.

Personally, the deputation from the Transvaal burghers had little to complain of in respect of their reception in England. They were treated with civility, or even more, but the civility was coupled with a firm refusal to discuss a reversal of the act by which the independence of the Transvaal had been extinguished. Little enthusiastic as the Beaconsfield Ministry had been in promoting the material interests of the country and the people whose liberty had been taken away, it would be impossible for it, without discredit, to entertain proposals for the undoing of the annexation. The thing had been done and could not be undone. No doubt it seemed to those with whom the Transvaal delegates pleaded their cause that a firm attitude was the kindest attitude possible, and that the Transvaal burghers, when once they realised that the annexation was a permanent step, would settle down to enjoy the blessings of British rule. It seems probable, too, that an official report had reached the Colonial Office to the effect that the protest was only formal, and that it had been framed for the purpose of saving the credit of the influential men by whom it was promoted. The delegates returned unsatisfied to those who had sent them, and thus the first chapter in the history of the last twenty years of political life in South Africa came to an end.

CHAPTER II.

HOW TROUBLES BEGAN.

IT is worth while, before going into the history of the events that followed on the annexation of the Transvaal, to give a glance at the financial and industrial condition of South Africa at the date of the commencement of Sir Bartle Frere's term of office as High Commissioner.

A few years previously to the inception of the confederation policy which Sir Bartle Frere was commissioned to carry out, South Africa had received a most important industrial impulse through the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley. The history of that discovery need not be told here, nor need anything be said about the dispute with the Orange Free State that finally located the diamond mines in British territory, at the expense of a sum of £90,000 paid to the Free State as compensation. Up to that discovery there had been little or nothing in the shape of industrial development in South Africa. The country received so little consideration from the outside world, that it was thought sufficient if monthly mails were despatched in five hundred-ton steamers that spent six weeks in making the voyage from England to Capetown. Of railways it could hardly be said there were any. Capetown was con-

nected with the suburb of Wynberg by a line some eight miles in length, and with the Dutch town of Wellington by another line of about fifty miles. Beyond these lines there was not a mile of railway in South Africa, with the exception of a short length of about five miles in Natal. Travelling was performed by wagon or by post-cart, the former method being extraordinarily slow, and the latter not seldom dangerous. Over comparatively short distances, here and there, coaches or omnibuses were run, but these, by reason of their slowness and discomfort, were more avoided than sought after. The idea of constructing anything like trunk lines of railway to the interior had hardly been entertained, and it was almost a universally accepted maxim that such lines, if constructed, could not possibly find traffic enough to pay for their working.

The discovery of the diamond-fields brought a new force into the country. It has been a common saying that the discovery of the Kimberley mines saved South Africa from bankruptcy. Whether that is true or not, it certainly infused new life and vigour into a population which had been well content to be asleep, and it may be held that it was the prosperity promised by the discovery that gave Cape politicians the courage to assume full responsibility for the government of the Colony. Kimberley and its diamonds stood before the imagination of colonists both in the Cape Colony and Natal as a dazzling vision, the reality of which was assured by the influx of adventurous men who poured into the country to try their luck, and by the rapid increase in the value of Colonial imports. The absence of telegraphic communication, it may be said, was hardly

less remarkable than the absence of railways. Even up to 1877 there was no telegraphic communication between the Cape Colony and Natal; the extension of the wire from Capetown to Kimberley was a new thing; while in Natal the telegraphic accommodation was limited to a length of fifty miles between Durban and Pietermaritzburg—a length that was always breaking down, and the charges over which were extravagant. So defective were the means for the conveyance of news, that as late as 1877 it not unfrequently happened that the latest news from Europe reached Natal by way of Kimberley, having been wired there from Capetown, and thence brought overland to Natal, through the Free State, by post-cart. It was, moreover, characteristic of the backward state of things, that neither in the Cape Colony nor in Natal would any telegraphic message be accepted, except in English.

The discovery of the Kimberley diamond-fields, and the impulse it had given both to commerce and to travelling, had set the British Colonies of South Africa on a career of borrowing and railway building, while at the same time steps had been taken to improve the means of communication with Europe. As regards the ocean mail service, the *Balmoral Castle*, which had on her first voyage conveyed the new High Commissioner to Capetown, was one of the first of the fleet of new steamers built to carry on, together with the steamers of the company previously holding the mail contract, a weekly service with England. The Cape Government, freed from the trammels of supervision from Downing Street, had gone boldly into the market for a loan of four millions, for purposes of railway construction. Some of those lines, all

of which aimed at securing the new trade that had sprung up with Kimberley, were, in 1877, in progress, while others were just about to be commenced. In Natal, which also looked for its share of the new Kimberley trade, railway building on a more limited scale had also begun, the first aim being to connect the port with the capital. It will thus be seen that the arrival in South Africa of the representative of the new "forward" policy was coincident with a very considerable expansion of South African industry and enterprise, and there can be little doubt that in South Africa generally, but especially among the British section of the population, there was a disposition to view with confidence and favour anything that seemed to associate itself with the expanding prosperity. As for any hidden designs that slept under the surface of high official policy, very few persons troubled to think of them. What they saw was increased prosperity, with its accompaniments of more money and wider credit, and that was quite sufficient.

Not many months had passed before rumours of trouble began to be heard from several directions. It began to be known, for instance, that Sir Bartle Frere did not find himself at all in harmony with the Ministers responsible for the administration of the affairs of Cape Colony. It must be confessed that in a great many cases the impression left by this report was that the Ministers who could not work harmoniously with so distinguished an official as Sir Bartle Frere must themselves be grievously in the wrong. The truth was, however, that, still accepting the counsels of Mr. Saul Solomon, the Molteno Ministry declined to do anything towards furthering the confederation policy which it was

the High Commissioner's aim to carry out, or to assist in any of the steps by which that policy was to be promoted. The conflict of feeling became more marked when, in the later months of 1877, native disturbances broke out around the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. How those disturbances originated has never been adequately explained; but it does not seem unreasonable to hold that, when once the idea of a native combination against Europeans had been accepted, any little disorder among a native population would be liable to be exaggerated considerably beyond just and proper limits. The disturbance originally manifested itself among the Gcalekas, who, under their old chief Kreli, occupied a portion of the country to the eastward of the Kei River, beyond the then borders of the Colony. The disturbance seemed in the first instance to be scarcely more than a matter of police, and was to all appearance suppressed in a few weeks. Hardly, however, were congratulations at its suppression at an end, when the aspect of the situation was changed by a renewal of the disturbances, in which this time the Gaikas, who actually lived within the boundaries of the Cape Colony, took part. The position of the frontier districts of the Colony thus became somewhat serious, though again it may be noted that the native aggression which had been so conspicuous in connection with former native wars was here conspicuous by its absence. The problem before the civil and military authorities was, not to drive the natives away from the homes of the settlers, but to drive them out of the fastnesses in which they found refuge. In this the combined Imperial and Colonial forces were in the end suc-

cessful, at least so far as the Colony proper was concerned. To the east of the Kei River, which then formed the boundary of the Cape Colony in the direction of Natal, the Government had to be content with only a partial success, and never succeeded in laying hands upon the chief Krel, who was regarded as the central point of the disturbance.

In the meantime, however, other events had been occurring which fairly eclipsed in interest the varying success of the operations against the rebellious native tribes. The feeling of antagonism between Sir Bartle Frere and his Ministers, which had been apparent from the first moment of the High Commissioner's landing in Capetown, had grown stronger as the Frontier war proceeded. A grave constitutional question arose with regard to the supreme control of the forces in the field. The right to this supreme control was claimed, perhaps not unnaturally, by the Imperial military authorities, but was denied by the Colonial Ministry, who held that, as they were responsible for the maintenance of order, the direction of military operations ought to rest with them. Had the Imperial authorities and the Colonial Ministry been working in harmony in respect of other matters this difficulty could no doubt have been amicably arranged. As it was, the complete antagonism between the Imperial authorities, headed by the High Commissioner, and the Colonial Ministry on what was then the vital problem of the moment—confederation—gave to the difference of opinion over the military question a sharpness which threatened to bring matters to a deadlock. The military authorities made no concealment of the contempt with which they regarded

the Colonial Ministry, while members of the Colonial Ministry made no secret of their objection to the claims of the military authorities. In all this there can be no doubt Mr. Molteno and his colleagues were acting in pursuance of their originally expressed convictions with regard to the question of confederation, and in full knowledge that it was the aim and object of Sir Bartle Frere to bring about confederation in spite of them, if he could not obtain their assistance. It may be suspected, however, that, though the Colonial Ministry were perfectly within their right in adopting an attitude in accordance with their convictions, they did not put their convictions into action with either the courtesy or the prudence that properly belonged to a strong case. The Premier, Mr. Molteno, was not particularly fond of work, and his weakness in this respect was shared by more than one of his colleagues. Hence the greatest share of responsibility, as well as the greatest share in giving public and private expression to the views of the Ministry, devolved upon its junior member, Mr. John Xavier Merriman, who held the portfolio of Minister of Crown Lands and Public Works. Mr. Merriman's honesty and energy were undoubted, but he could not be said to be gifted either with modesty or prudence. There can be no doubt that it was very largely owing to the personal defects in Mr. Merriman's character that the antagonism between Sir Bartle Frere and the Ministers who were his official advisers in his capacity as Governor of the Cape of Good Hope assumed so sharp an aspect. Sir Bartle Frere was, however, not a man to allow himself to be balked in respect of any matter upon which he had set his mind, and early in 1878, in

order to put an end to a conflict which threatened to mar the policy it was his mission to carry through, he took the strong and, as many have held, unconstitutional step of dismissing his Ministers.

It would be idle to deny that, by a very large majority of the British community in South Africa, this step was, on the whole, approved. There were various reasons for this approval. To begin with, perhaps, Sir Bartle Frere's reputation stood so high that there was a difficulty in believing that he could do wrong. Again, with a very large section, the commercial section especially, of the British population of South Africa the increased interest shown by the Imperial Government in South African affairs was popular. Quite apart from any patriotic feelings that might be stirred up, the display of such interest in all probability meant the expenditure of Imperial treasure in warlike preparations, and from such expenditure Colonial interests could not fail to benefit. But, further than this, the Molteno Ministry had become unpopular, not only in the Cape Colony, but throughout British South Africa at large. The constitutional principle for which it was contending was not understood very widely, and even with many by whom it was understood it was regarded as academic rather than practical. So far as regards the opinion of British South Africa outside the Cape Colony. In the Cape Colony itself the Molteno Ministry had a very powerful Opposition to face. The whole of the Eastern Province, which included Port Elizabeth and other mercantile towns, was opposed to it, regarding it as essentially a Capetown Ministry, and though the Ministry had a few years previously won the support of the Frontier vote by undertaking the construction of a

line of railway from East London to Queenstown, the loyalty of the Frontier vote had been seriously shaken by the Frontier disturbances, which had produced a longing for vigorous action, even if at the expense of constitutional principle. In all probability Sir Bartle Frere made a pretty safe estimate of the manner in which his action would be regarded before taking the final step of dismissing his Ministers. If he had any doubt on the subject, the dismissed Ministers were good enough to assist in justifying him. Instead of endeavouring to rouse the country on a question in respect of which there was a large amount of right on their side, they sulked, and left the public judgment to go against them by default. The result was that, when the Cape Parliament reassembled, a substantial majority in the House of Assembly approved Sir Bartle Frere's action.

The formation of a new Ministry was not a matter of any great difficulty, though the choice of a Premier, which almost of necessity rested with Sir Bartle Frere, at first caused some little surprise. The selection fell on Sir Gordon Sprigg, then known as Mr. John Gordon Sprigg, one of the representatives in the Cape Parliament of East London. What was previously known of Sir Gordon Sprigg did not seem to sanction the idea that he could be of much assistance to Sir Bartle Frere in respect of the scheme for the confederation of South Africa. What was known of him was that he was a ready speaker and a political pupil and warm admirer of Mr. Saul Solomon, the real inspirer of the resistance to a confederation policy. As a disciple of Mr. Saul Solomon, as well as the representative of a locality which had distinctly benefited by the railway policy

of the Molteno Ministry, it should not have seemed likely that Sir Gordon Sprigg would either be an accomplice after the fact in the displacement of that Ministry or give any assistance to the cause of confederation. It soon became evident, however, that Sir Gordon Sprigg was not only perfectly ready to accept office, but was also quite ready to be converted to the policy of confederation. Within three weeks of his becoming Premier he had openly declared his conversion, thus enabling the High Commissioner to feel that, in addition to the annexation of the Transvaal, an important step had been accomplished towards the goal of his endeavours.

While these events were in progress in the Cape Colony matters had not been standing still elsewhere. Although there was no danger to be apprehended from any incursion by the Zulus into the Transvaal, certain questions had arisen with regard to the Zulu-Transvaal frontier which called for some sort of settlement. In some respects the limits of Zululand were clear and well defined. This was particularly the case along the south-eastern border of the country, where the Buffalo and Tugela rivers formed an easily recognisable frontier from the Drakensburg Mountains to the sea. The north-western frontier of Zululand, however, where it marched with Transvaal territory, was far less well defined, and owing to this cause farms had been claimed by Transvaal burghers the right to which was denied by the Zulus. The question as between the Zulus and the Transvaal had previously been under the consideration of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, as representing native affairs in Natal, and it was always understood, and the Zulus always

alleged, that his opinion had been in their favour. This reference of Zulu questions to the Natal Government, it may be observed, was in a sense the result of the action taken by that Government, on the death of the old chief Panda, in 1873, in sending Sir Theophilus Shepstone into Zululand for the purpose of crowning Cetywayo as Panda's successor. How far Cetywayo really recognised that coronation seems to be a matter of doubt ; but it can readily be understood that he was willing to make the most of the disposition shown in Natal to support his case against the Transvaal. Some little alarm was caused in Natal in the latter part of 1877 by reports that the Zulus were taking steps to assert their alleged right to the land in dispute by the erection upon it of a large military kraal. The alarm, however, passed by, and no doubt the reports which gave rise to it were largely exaggerated. What might have been regarded as a more just cause for alarm, had the settlers near the Zulu border been sufficiently informed at the moment, was the fact that, on the strength of documents said to have been discovered at Pretoria, Sir Theophilus Shepstone had departed from his former opinion as to the rights of this boundary question, and had come to the conclusion that the Transvaal claim, and not the Zulu claim, ought to receive his support.

It would be unjust to the memory of an old and long-respected servant of the Crown to suppose that, in thus modifying his convictions, Sir Theophilus Shepstone was influenced by any but the most sincere motives. There can be no question, however, that his change of front gave to the Zulu problem a sharpness which it had not before

possessed, and did much to undermine the confidence reposed by the Zulus in the representatives of the British Government. At a meeting which took place between Sir Theophilus Shepstone and leading Zulu chiefs near the Transvaal frontier of Zululand, very bitter language was used by the representatives of Cetywayo, and it was even said that, owing to the accidental firing of a shot by one of the Zulu attendants, some risk arose of a tragical ending to the occasion. In order to clear up a question that might become dangerous, a suggestion was made by Sir Henry Bulwer, then Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, for the appointment of a commission to investigate and report on the claims of the contending parties. The suggestion was not received particularly well by the British officials then responsible for the administration of the Transvaal, but it met with the approval of the High Commissioner. At the very least, even in the eyes of those who believed the Zulu claim to be ill-founded, such a Commission might serve the purpose of gaining time. The Commission was accordingly appointed, consisting of Colonel Anthony Durnford, the officer commanding the Royal Engineers in Natal; the Attorney-General (now the Chief Justice) of Natal, Sir Michael Gallwey; and Mr. John Shepstone, half-brother to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who was then filling in Natal the post of Secretary for Native Affairs. The Commission was perhaps as fair a one as could have been appointed, an expert on either side being balanced by the judgment of a not otherwise than eminent lawyer. There can, however, be no question that the ruling personality in this Commission was Colonel Durnford. A man of the highest courage and

integrity, and essentially a soldier in all his ideas, he had gained unpopularity in Natal, partly through his impatience at all civil restraints and partly through his known sympathy, as regards native affairs, with Bishop Colenso. There could with him, in entering on such an inquiry, be no other resolve present save that of doing the strictest justice to the case as presented to him. Owing to the nature of the evidence given on both sides, and owing, there can be little doubt, to the commanding influence of Colonel Durnford in dealing with that evidence, the result of the inquiry was a surprise to not a few, for the report of the Commissioners was entirely in favour of the Zulu claim and against the claim of the Transvaal.

The effect of that report upon the general situation was not to be immediately apparent. The Commission and its work have a distinct connection with the outbreak of the Zulu war, and other events, by which that war was preceded, demand some prior consideration. The policy which it was Sir Bartle Frere's mission to carry out demanded not only the linking together of the various civilised States of South Africa ; it required also the absorption of any native territories by which those States might be divided. This necessity seemed to apply in a special way to the large stretch of independent native territory then lying between the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony and the southern frontier of Natal—a territory that reached inland as far as the mountainous boundary of Basutoland, and which possessed a sea-coast not much less than two hundred miles in length. The western portion of this territory was occupied by the Gcalekas and other kindred tribes, who had been important

factors in the recent war along the Cape frontier, while on the extreme east it was the home of the Griquas, a people of Hottentot origin, who had been moved down there from their original home on the Orange River. Between these two districts—between the Transkei and Griqualand East—lay the extensive territory of the Pondos, an entirely independent race who, by virtue of a treaty entered into with the British Government more than thirty years before Sir. Bartle Frere's advent to South Africa, had enjoyed a peaceful and, so far as all surrounding communities were concerned, inoffensive existence. The coast line of this territory was for the most part dangerous and inaccessible, but at one point, otherwise the most inaccessible of all, it was broken by a wide and navigable river entrance, forming a harbour of no small capacity and value. For years this harbour had been regarded as hardly worthy of consideration. The new schemes for South Africa, however, were coupled with a newly awakened fear that some other European Power might find a footing on the coast, thus disturbing the hitherto undisputed dominance of Great Britain. What if this harbour of St. John's River, as it was called, should furnish the dreaded opportunity?

In the following of this dread, various overtures had been made to Umqikela, the paramount chief of Pondoland, to acknowledge British sovereignty over his territory, and to mark his acknowledgment by accepting a British Resident and handing over the port to British control. Umqikela, however, was possessed of something of the disposition of Naboth. He was indisposed to part with his independence, and regarded the long period during which he had observed his treaty obligations as

entitling him to the confidence of Great Britain. Actuated by these feelings and convictions, he had declined the proposals made to him. This unwillingness proved to Umqikela, as it proved to Naboth, his destruction. It was not long before circumstances arose that provided an opportunity of convincing him of the unwisdom of rejecting proposals that amounted to demands. Owing to somewhat obscure causes, a disturbance arose, about Easter, 1878, in Griqualand East, lying, as it did, between Pondoland and Natal. Griqualand East, it must be borne in mind, belonged essentially to the Griquas, who were settled in it at a time when it passed by the name of Nomansland. A town had sprung up, named Kokstad after the original Griqua chief, Adam Kok, and had become the centre of a not inconsiderable European population. In some respects the position was curious and abnormal, for the European population were really in the position of aliens living in native territory. An alarm arose. The Europeans, believing they were going to be attacked by the Griquas, laagered themselves in the town. The Griquas, believing they were going to be attacked by the Europeans, betook themselves to the hills. The Europeans suffered from the accidental explosion of their powder magazine. The Griquas suffered from an attack made on them by the Europeans, assisted by sundry native tribes, far below the Griquas in civilisation. The Griquas were defeated, losing their farms and everything they had to lose. A large number of them were conveyed to Capetown as rebels, and, after a delay of several months, were set at liberty by the Courts, on the ground that, as they were not British subjects, the Courts had no jurisdiction over them.

This little disturbance in Griqualand East, which was regretted and regarded as utterly unnecessary by all who were acquainted with the circumstances of the case, furnished the opportunity for dealing with the Naboth of Pondoland. A charge was made against him of harbouring criminal fugitives from Griqualand East, and of sympathising with the Griquas. The latter charge was a merely trumped-up affair, without the smallest evidence to justify it. For the former, there was perhaps some shadow of a foundation, for, shortly before the Griqua disturbance, a native accused of murder in Griqualand East had taken refuge in Pondoland, and had been so far sheltered by the Pondo chief that he was not given up to justice. There are, however, three considerations which reduce the Pondo chief's offence to the most shadowy of dimensions, if indeed they do not obliterate it altogether. In the first place, as Griqualand East was an independent native territory, the culprit was not a fugitive from British justice. In the next place, as Griqualand East was an independent native territory, no one had any right to demand the surrender of the fugitive in the name of the British Government. In the third place, even if Griqualand East had been British territory, there was no kind of extradition treaty between the British Government and the Pondo chief. It may be added, further, with regard to the charge of sympathising with the Griquas, that Umqikela had, at the very earliest stage of the Griqua outbreak, received a friendly message from the Natal Government, reminding him of his treaty obligations, and had returned a reassuring and appreciative answer. All these things, however, failed to save him. When the vineyard of Naboth is required, its owner has

little chance. On the grounds above stated, and none other, Umqikela was declared to be deposed from his position as paramount chief of Pondoland ; the port of St. John's was declared to be British territory, and a British Resident was appointed to supervise the affairs of the country. In order to make the annexation effectual, at the end of August, 1878, the general in command of the Imperial forces in South Africa, accompanied by some members of his staff and a company of an infantry regiment, went round in a small steamer to take possession. It is not clear whether any resistance was apprehended. At any rate, there was none. The British flag was hoisted, and a fort, named after a member of the general's staff, was constructed. That confidence was felt in the peaceful character of the Pondos seems to be certain, for the fort was so placed that any enterprising natives provided with firearms could have made it untenable in half an hour.

Up to this point, and especially since the dismissal of the Molteno Ministry and its replacement by a more subservient Cabinet, the steps taken for the consolidation and confederation of South Africa, by annexations supported by military force, had gone forward cheerfully enough, and, on the whole, with the approval of the British community in South Africa. The doubters and the critics were in a minority, and were accused by the majority, to whom the display of Imperial vigour was welcome, of mere factiousness. The moment was approaching when the High Commissioner would be free to play his leading card—to commence, that is to say, upon that subjugation of Zululand which had been determined on almost from the first day of his

arrival in South Africa. There were, however, certain other preparations to be made before active operations could be commenced. One of these steps was the strengthening, as far as possible, of the force of Imperial troops in South Africa. This, it may be said, was one of the points in respect of which the antagonism between the High Commissioner and the Molteno Ministry had been keenest. Mr. Molteno and his colleagues refused to have anything to do with the bringing out of fresh infantry regiments from England, and there is some reason for believing that it was the disagreement on this point that finally induced Sir Bartle Frere to dismiss his advisers. Without the presence of those additional regiments, however, the solution of the Zulu problem, as Sir Bartle Frere intended to solve it, would have seemed little short of madness, while it was at the same time becoming plain that, in spite of the inaction of the burghers of the Transvaal, matters were in anything but a settled state in that direction. The circumstances under which additional reinforcements were granted by the Beaconsfield Ministry, and the strict injunctions as to caution with which the granting of the reinforcements was accompanied, are matters of public notoriety.

In the latter months of 1878 preparations were so forward, so far as the purely military aspect of things was concerned, that it became expedient for the High Commissioner temporarily to remove his headquarters from Capetown to Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal. It was first of all necessary, however, to connect Capetown and Pietermaritzburg by telegraph. There were two routes which might be taken. The wire might have been brought from

Kimberley through the Free State, and so down to the capital of Natal ; or it might be extended from the Cape frontier through the native territories lying between Natal and the Cape Colony. As time was of importance, there were objections to the former route. To carry a wire through the Free State would necessitate some convention on the subject with the Free State Government, and, quite apart from the fact that, owing to the feeling created by the Transvaal annexation, the Free State Government might have been unwilling to offer any facilities in such a matter, no convention could become valid without the consent of the Volksraad, a matter involving delay. It seemed best, therefore, to run the risks of an extension of the line by the other route, permission for which had up to then always been refused by the Pondo chief. In order to make an impression, a flying column consisting of the 90th Infantry Regiment, a battery of artillery, and some irregular horse, was despatched from the Cape frontier, under the command of Sir Evelyn Wood (then Lieutenant-Colonel of the 90th Foot), on an overland march to Natal. The march was not unattended with risk. The country to be traversed was almost unknown, and it was by no means impossible that the Pondos, under the irritation aroused by recent events, might attack or harass the column. The march, however, was accomplished without any kind of exciting incident, and, as a result of the impression created, the last gap in the overland wire from Capetown to Natal was speedily bridged over. That the completion of this telegraphic connection was facilitated by the superstition of the natives with regard to the wire and its uses, there can be no doubt. It is a fact on record, that even when

the Cape frontier was in a state of active disorder, the telegraph wire was never cut, nor were the construction parties ever molested. Of such curious contradictions is the South African native made.

CHAPTER III.

THE ZULU WAR.

AS the existence of a general native danger was looked to as the main justification for Lord Carnarvon's scheme of confederation, so it of necessity followed that the Zulu problem occupied a front place in the list of matters to be dealt with before confederation could be successfully accomplished. From a diplomatic point of view, moreover, the annexation of the Transvaal had given increased, it might almost be said overwhelming, importance to the solution of the Zulu problem. If the annexation was to be justified in the eyes of the British nation and of the world at large, the justification would have to be found (1) in the alleged danger which threatened the Transvaal from Zululand, and (2) in the extirpation of that danger by the suppression of the Zulu power.

Diplomacy is a game in which people can very easily persuade themselves to believe that that really exists which they wish to find existing. Hence there is room to assume that both Lord Carnarvon and Sir Bartle Frere, the special exponent of Lord Carnarvon's views in South Africa, really believed that the Transvaal had been in danger from the Zulus, and that the suppression by Great Britain of the

Zulu power would convince the burghers of the Transvaal, not only of the irresistible might of Great Britain, but also of the benevolence of British intentions towards themselves. Assuming this, there seems to be some shade of excuse for the resolve that, in some way or other, upon some pretext or other, the power of Cetywayo had to be broken by his regiments being brought face to face with British forces. For that months before any direct action was taken by the High Commissioner with regard to Zululand an intention had been formed of invading the country, admits of no doubt whatever. There is the testimony of persons of the very highest credit that, long before any military or other preparations had been made against Zululand, the intention of being in that country by a certain date was clearly present to the minds of the military authorities. There is, further, no doubt whatever that, upon the strength of information with regard to those military projects, a question on the subject was asked in the Natal Legislature a few months before the Zulu war began. The question was asked, but was never answered, official persuasion being applied to the would-be questioner to induce him to let the matter drop.

In dealing, then, in any way with the Zulu war, the fact has to be kept in mind that, in the intention of the highest representatives of British Imperial authority in South Africa, a Zulu war was a foregone conclusion. It was a foregone conclusion because the destruction of the Zulu power was the keystone of South African confederation. A pretext or justification for a declaration of war had to be found, and it is not to be denied that this was a matter of some little difficulty. There can be no doubt that a

decision adverse to the Zulus on the Transvaal boundary question might very well have furnished the justification that was needed. Border questions have always been found convenient for the fomenting of quarrels even between civilised States. But, as it happened, the commission appointed to investigate this question of the Zulu-Transvaal boundary had reported entirely in favour of the Zulu claim, their report leading to the compilation by the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, at the request of the High Commissioner, of an elaborate treatise on the conflict, or otherwise, of the private rights possessed by the occupiers of farms in the disputed territory with the sovereign rights of the Zulu chief. Apart, however, from the questions thus specially raised, an effort, and without doubt an organised effort, had been made for some time previously to represent the Zulu chief and the Zulu character in the blackest possible colours. Everything connected with events in Zululand came through the department of native affairs in Natal, and, without saying anything more, it is impossible to acquit the heads of that department of a tendency to put the worst and the most alarming construction upon every saying and every action of the Zulu chief and his councillors. There were, it may be said, two men in high positions, one an official and the other not, who stood out against this tendency. The official was Sir Henry Bulwer, then Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, who manifested a spirit of caution and fairness very markedly in contrast with the hasty and alarmist views of the apostles of confederation. The other was Bishop Colenso, whose love of justice and knowledge of the Zulu language and character enabled him to do much to check the tide of calumny, even if he could not

succeed in stopping it altogether. With Bishop Colenso in this humane and chivalrous effort was associated that most distinguished South African colonist and statesman, Mr. Saul Solomon, of Capetown. It is not often that much can be done by single individuals ; but it may truly be said that during the whole time of the confederation fever Bishop Colenso in Natal, and Mr. Saul Solomon in Capetown, succeeded in upholding a standard of justice and of moral principle which was of the most material assistance to all who declined to be swept along by the current of Imperial policy.

As supplying the justification for a Zulu war the dispute over the boundary question fell flat, and not even the nice distinctions raised about private rights and sovereign rights could galvanise it into any semblance of a *casus belli*. One or two incidents that occurred during the year 1878, however, seemed more likely to provide the opportunity that was required. A wife of the powerful Zulu chief Sirayo, whose district bordered upon Natal, fell into disgrace, and, crossing the river boundary, took refuge on Natal soil. Thither she was pursued by two of the chief's sons, who forced her to recross into Zululand. It can hardly be doubted that, whatever the fault of the woman may have been, and whatever the treatment accorded to her when once again in Zululand, this act on the part of Sirayo's sons was perfectly unjustifiable. It constituted a distinct and flagrant violation of British territory, and even though the young men offered neither threat nor violence to any one in the Colony, the act could not be overlooked. Complaint had been made at the time by the Natal Government to Cetywayo, and the reply received had been both regretful and conciliatory. Nothing definite,

however, was arranged in the way of a substantial expression of regret, and the matter was left open pending the arrival of the High Commissioner in Natal. In the meantime another little border incident, of a more trivial kind, had occurred. A party of surveyors were engaged on the Natal side of the Tugela River—the boundary, throughout its lower course, between Natal and Zululand—in laying out a new road to the drift, or ford, across the stream. What their instructions were has never been made very clear; but it is certain that their movements were watched by the Zulus from the other side, and that on their crossing beyond what was regarded as the boundary line they were surrounded by Zulus, who, it has been alleged, hustled and threatened them. There can be no question that the road party acted imprudently, and in all probability the Zulus were both angry and suspicious. The incident, however, was a trivial one, the worst that happened to the survey party being a good fright and the possible loss of a pocket-knife. The incident was, indeed, so trivial that, though it was officially reported, the general public heard nothing of it at the time it occurred.

From the material supplied by such occurrences as these an indictment of the Zulu chief and of Zulu policy had to be drawn up; helped out as far as possible by the inclusion of the general objection to the presence of so strong a native military power in close proximity to British territory. It is a fact to be borne constantly in mind that there was at this time no kind of alarm in Natal, and no kind of suspicion that a Zulu war lay in the immediate future. So far, indeed, from the High Commissioner's arrival in Natal being associated in the public mind with

any approaching Zulu crisis, the current belief, founded on Sir Bartle Frere's general reputation, was rather that his mission was a distinctly peaceful one, and that any questions between the Zulus and the British Government would be adjusted without any kind of difficulty or irritation. This impression was supported and confirmed by the award that had been given with regard to the Zulu-Transvaal boundary. That question being thus out of the way, what was there for the British Government and the Zulus to quarrel about? If there had been any dread of a Zulu invasion of Natal, certainly alarm should have been felt through those districts that bordered on Zululand. But, as a matter of fact, no kind of alarm was felt along the Zulu border at the time of the High Commissioner's arrival in Natal, and when, a little later, uneasiness began to be expressed, it was not along the border, but in the capital, separated from Zululand by some sixty or seventy miles of direct distance. It became, indeed, a saying at the time that the alarm about the Zulus increased as the square of the distance from the Zulu frontier.

As the year 1878 drew towards its close, the impression became stronger and stronger that some vigorous action against the Zulus was in contemplation. The resources of the local printing offices were put into requisition by the military authorities for the purpose of publishing and disseminating all possible information with regard to the various Zulu regiments, accompanied by crude diagrams illustrating the mode of Zulu attack. At the same time steps were taken to secure the services of the colonial volunteers, a force of mounted riflemen numbering altogether some three or four hundred,

for service outside the limits of the Colony, beyond which limits they could not legally be compelled to go. The individual consent of the members of this force was obtained without much difficulty, the impression prevailing that, even if there was any invasion of Zululand, it would assume the character of little more than a military promenade through the country. Early in December it became known that a meeting was to take place between representatives of the British Government and representatives of the Zulu chief for the purpose of declaring the award in respect of the disputed boundary. The meeting took place on the Natal side of the Tugela River, not very far from its mouth, on the 11th of December, 1878. The reading of the award with regard to the Transvaal-Zulu boundary was, as may be imagined, received with much satisfaction by the Zulu chiefs who were present. The award, however, was not the only document with which the British Commissioners were armed. Following on the heels of the award was an ultimatum demanding, among other things, satisfaction, in the shape of a fine of cattle, for the violation of Natal territory by the sons of Sirayo and for the incivility to the surveying party. The chief demand of the ultimatum, however, went far beyond this, being no less than a demand for the abolition of the Zulu military system, and the disbandment of the Zulu regiments, an answer to be given within thirty days. The ultimatum was signed, it may be noted, by Sir Henry Bulwer in his capacity as Lieutenant-Governor of Natal. To those who were acquainted with his opinions the appending of his signature to this document caused some surprise, and it could only be supposed that

his signature had been obtained through the employment of constant pressure on the part of the High Commissioner, and others who shared the High Commissioner's views.

By those who understood the Zulus it was at once seen that this demand for an immediate revolution in Zululand was a demand that could not be at once complied with, that it was not intended to be complied with, and that it was really tantamount to a declaration of war. A copy of the award and the ultimatum was handed to Cetywayo's representatives. There has always, however, been grave doubt as to whether this copy ever reached him, or, reaching him, whether it was ever intelligibly interpreted. The only European in Zululand was the trader, John Dunn, who, having been an active agent in providing the Zulus with guns, was now bent on contributing his share to the overthrow of the people through whom he had grown rich. The chiefs who attended at the reading of the award and ultimatum could give Cetywayo the general substance of those documents, no doubt ; but there is great reason to believe that the full text of the British demands never came to his knowledge. Meantime the military preparations for invading Zululand were being completed. It cannot be said that the authors of the scheme of invasion showed any particular talent. The plan was to enter Zululand with three columns operating at great distances from each other, and possessing no means of inter-communication, in order to attack an enemy known to be in vastly superior force, capable of considerable rapidity of movement, and occupying an interior line of defence. The headquarter column, under the command of Lieutenant-General Lord

Chelmsford, was to invade Zululand from the upper districts of Natal, by way of a ford across the Buffalo River known as Rorke's Drift ; a second column, under Sir Evelyn Wood, was to enter Zululand from the direction of the Transvaal ; and a third column, under Colonel Pearson, then commanding the second battalion of "The Buffs," was to enter Zululand near the coast. About midway between Lord Chelmsford's and Colonel Pearson's column, a fourth column was organised, consisting almost entirely of native levies under European officers, picked up without much regard to their qualifications. What this fourth column was supposed to do was never very clearly understood. It is certain that it never entered, or attempted to enter, Zululand, and it is equally certain that it never acted in any way in the defence of Natal against a Zulu invasion.

What was the composition and fighting power of the force which, thus split into three weak detachments, was entrusted with the task of enforcing the ultimatum ? There were, to begin with, six infantry battalions, two—the first and second battalions of the South Wales Borderers—with the headquarter column ; two—the second battalion of "The Buffs" and the 99th Regiment—with the coast column ; and two—the 80th and the 90th—with Sir Evelyn Wood. All three columns had a fair amount of artillery, while the coast column had the further assistance of a brigade of seamen from the men-of-war then on the station. With each column, too, there was a certain force of mounted men, consisting of Natal volunteers or mounted police, some irregular horse, and a small force of mounted natives, known as the "Natal Native Horse," recruited from a mission

station near Pietermaritzburg. There was also with the headquarter column and the coast column some force of natives raised in Natal, and known as the Native Contingent. If that whole force could have acted together, it would have been fairly powerful, notwithstanding the fact that infantry regiments are utterly unsuited to the conditions of native warfare in South Africa. Being thus split up, the weakness of the several columns was increased by the fact that there was no means for ensuring any kind of concerted action. There was no telegraph even from the headquarter column to the base of operations in Pietermaritzburg, still less between any one column and another. These, however, were not the only disabilities under which the force laboured. It suffered perhaps even more seriously through the absence, among those high in command, of practical fighting men. Lord Chelmsford, personally one of the most amiable men that ever breathed, was not a man who possessed confidence in himself, or who could command the confidence of others. Beyond this, he was largely ruled by his staff, among whom abounding self-assurance was linked with very limited ability. Among the officers in command of the several infantry battalions there were few who had had any experience outside the routine of a garrison town. In fact, it may be said that, with one other exception, there were only two really good practical fighting men among the whole of the senior officers attached to the command, and those were Sir Evelyn Wood and Sir Redvers Buller. The high distinction which these two officers have since attained is sufficient indication of the superior qualities they brought into the field in the year of the invasion of Zululand.

The thirty days' grace allowed for the acceptance of the terms of the ultimatum quickly passed, and on the 11th of January, 1879, the invasion of Zululand was duly commenced. Both at Rorke's Drift and at the Lower Tugela men, horses, and stores were taken across on to Zulu soil without any sign of opposition. It seemed as though the predictions of some professed experts in Zulu matters would be fulfilled, and that the Zulus would permit a peaceful occupation of their country. As opposed to this view, there were not wanting those who warned the military authorities to suspect the existence of a trap, and it seems indeed quite reasonable to suppose that the absence of all sign of resistance produced a dangerous feeling of confidence and security. For upwards of a week after the invasion of Zululand commenced, no incident of importance occurred. The coast column, under Colonel Pearson, advanced by easy marches towards the mission station at Etshowe, while the head-quarter column, advancing only a few miles from Rorke's Drift, formed an encampment on the eastern side of the remarkable hill known by the name of Isandhlwana. It seems impossible to understand how any one possessed of even the most elementary military knowledge could have selected such a spot for a camping ground. The position was one exactly calculated to give an overwhelming advantage to any force capable of rapid movement and superior in numbers to the British column. The rocky eminence of Isandhlwana almost completely separated the column from its immediate base of operations at Rorke's Drift, with which communication could only be kept up across the narrow "nek" that separated Isandhlwana from

a second rocky eminence subsequently known as "the Koppie." As the result proved, it was possible for a large Zulu force actually to pass behind the hill and cut off the column from the Natal border without any one in the camp being aware of its presence. What, however, most of all testified to the disregard of military precaution was the fact, astounding as it still seems, that the camp was unlaagered. It was an open camp, spread over a considerable extent of ground, without the smallest attempt at protection in any direction. Not only was this neglect contrary to all the dearly-bought experience of former native wars, but it was in direct defiance of the precautions laid down by the headquarter staff some months before the invasion was entered on.

The 22nd of January, 1879, was a fateful day for South Africa. By a somewhat remarkable coincidence the day was notable for a total eclipse of the sun, throwing an additional gloom over a sky already darkened by gathering rain-clouds. It has been alleged, and with some considerable show of justification, that the Zulus had no intention of molesting the headquarter column on that day, and that the attack on Lord Chelmsford's camp was really the result of accidental and unforeseen circumstances. There is, however, no doubt as to the intention to interrupt the progress of the coast column, which was attacked by a considerable body, consisting of the local Zulu forces, early in the morning. This attack, although the column was on the march and unprovided with any entrenchments, was repelled without much difficulty and with but trifling loss, and the column pursued its way into the heart of the Zulu country. With the head-

quarter column the history of the day was far different. Even now it is difficult to understand the real sequence of events. What is beyond question is that on the previous day, the 21st of January, Lord Chelmsford had made a reconnaissance, with a portion of his force, some little distance from his camp, and had, as it was apparent afterwards, all but stumbled upon the main body of the Zulu army. On the morning of the 22nd a further reconnaissance was made, the force accompanying the general including the 2nd battalion of the South Wales Borderers, a battery or half-battery of artillery, and a portion of the mounted detachments. The force left in the camp, under the command of Colonel Pulleine, consisted of the 1st battalion of the same regiment, the rest of the mounted men and artillery, and some portion of the native contingent. The history of the day, so far as the force with Lord Chelmsford is concerned, is simple enough. The object of the reconnaissance was to ascertain if the Zulus were near the camp, and in what force, and it speaks ill indeed for the intelligence department that the whole main body of the Zulu army was lying within striking distance of the camp at Isandhlwana without any member of the staff being aware of the fact. As the day went on, the sound of artillery firing at the camp was distinctly heard by the officer in command of the artillery that accompanied Lord Chelmsford. With commendable promptitude, and on his own responsibility, he retraced his steps towards the camp, taking with him the infantry detachment that formed an escort for the guns. He had not gone very far, however, when he received peremptory orders to resume his march in the original direction. Some sense of

something having gone wrong came over the column as it returned towards the camp in the afternoon, but it was not until the camp itself was reached that the fact was realised that the day had been marked by one of the greatest tragedies of modern times.

What had been the course of events at the camp ? So many contradictory reports have been published, so many tales circulated in the first hours of terror and exaggeration, that it has become almost impossible to obtain a clear history of the Isandhlwana catastrophe. All who could have given a distinct narrative lost their lives that day, and it has to be admitted that the living military authorities, whose tactics have been called in question, have never exhibited any great anxiety to assist the public in getting at the facts. Accounts, too, that subsequently came from the Zulu side have been somewhat contradictory, though there seems, as has been said, to be some considerable ground for believing that the Zulus had no orders to attack the camp that day, and had originally no intention of doing so. The fact that appears most astounding, yet which cannot by any kind of argument be got rid of, is that the head-quarter staff, responsible as they were for the safety of a military expedition in an enemy's country, never knew that the whole Zulu army was lying in ambush in the very next valley. One half the force was taken out to look for an enemy who was close at hand ; the other half was left in an open camp, as little alive to the impending danger as though it had been a review day at Aldershot. The ordinary life of a camp was in progress. Fatigue parties were busy over their usual duties. Not a single disposition was taken for defence against any sudden attack ; not a single

case of ammunition had been opened ; not a single sentry had been posted on the hill from behind which the main Zulu attack was developed. How is this extraordinary absence of precaution to be accounted for ? If any solitary Dutchman, with his hereditary knowledge of the conditions of South African warfare, had been taken into the confidence of the staff, and if his advice had been acted on, the catastrophe would have been impossible. Experience had shown over and over again that a laager of wagons, lined with men possessed of firearms, could be relied on to repel the attack of infinitely superior Zulu forces. As it was, the wagons were standing in rows, in the orderly red-tape fashion of barrack-room traditions ; the tents were pitched in the open according to rule ; the artillery camp was here, the infantry camp was there. More fatal and overweening confidence was surely never known in the history of the British army.

The history of the disaster has to be pieced together as best one may. Early on the morning of the 22nd, Colonel Anthony Durnford, who was in command of a native levy at Rorke's Drift, received orders to bring up his force to Isandhlwana. The mere fact that such an order was given serves to illustrate the blind confidence that prevailed at headquarters. A single regiment of Zulus could, if they had been so minded, have practically destroyed the native levies, as they wound up in straggling line from the drift across the Buffalo River to the camp. That these levies were not interfered with gives support to the idea that there was no intention on the part of the Zulus to attack the camp that day. Somewhere about noon Colonel Durnford arrived at the camp. It is said—but who can verify such a statement?—

that he warmly remonstrated with the officer in charge of the camp with regard to its defenceless condition. By accident, perhaps—perhaps through some advance towards the camp of a portion of the Zulu army—some of the Natal Native Horse became engaged with a small body of Zulus at some little distance from the camp. It was, if the imperfect accounts may be trusted, an affair of outposts. It was serious enough, however, to attract attention in the camp, and to suggest the necessity for sending out supports. Who ordered the despatch of supports has been a matter of dispute ; but it is only fair to say that it was mainly on this ground that an attempt was made, in the most unfair and ungenerous manner, to throw the blame for the catastrophe on Colonel Durnford. It may have been that the Zulus were moving to attack the camp ; it may have been that they were not ; it really matters little which. Even if they had no settled intention of making an attack, the outpost affair, by that natural sequence of events which has marked the history of so many battles, quickly developed into a general engagement. The impatience of the Zulus became uncontrollable. Their whole host advanced into action. Following their favourite tactics, a portion of their army attacked the camp in front, while another portion, circling round behind the hill, made for the “nek” between the southern end of Isandhlwana and the Koppie.

That “nek” was the key of the position. If the “nek” could be held, and the advance of the “horn” of the Zulu army thus kept in check, it was possible that the camp might be saved. It was part of the known tactics of the Zulus not to make a final onslaught until they could make it effectually from two sides at once. If the “nek” could only be held,

and if in the meantime as stubborn a defence as possible could be offered to the front attack, there were, in spite of all disadvantages, great possibilities in the position. The front attack, delayed in its final rush and losing men heavily, might become disheartened. The sound of the firing at the camp might be heard by the other portion of the force, and in that case, in accordance with one of the oldest and soundest of military maxims, a rapid return would be made to the camp. Colonel Durnford, with the eye of a true soldier and relying on the knowledge he possessed of Zulu tactics, saw at a glance where the best chance of success lay. Whether on this point he was in disagreement with the officer left in command of the camp there are no means of knowing. It is, however, a not unnoticeable fact—a fact made plain when the camp was re-visited several months later—that, in his effort to hold the key of the position, he was supported by the barest handful of the regulars in the camp. The force which he called to his assistance consisted of the remainder of the Natal volunteers—those, that is, who had not started in the morning with Lord Chelmsford—and a limited number of the Natal mounted police. Had they only had any kind of an entrenchment, had they had time only to move up a few wagons, it is more than probable that their attempt to check the advance of the Zulus would have been successful. As it was, their effort, brave though it was as the effort of Horatius, was more hopeless. How gallant their effort was can be judged from the fact that many of the Natal volunteers were hardly more than boys, who had joined the expedition with no more thought of danger than might attach to a holiday picnic among

the Natal mountains. Formed up in a square, encouraged by the presence and example of one of the noblest of soldiers, they fired steadily, not a man moving from his place, and there they were found and recognised, with the empty cartridge cases scattered around them, four months afterwards. It is not too much to say that no more heroic act, against more hopeless odds, was ever performed by men of British birth. But the pressure of the advancing tide of Zulus was too strong for them. Assegais, thrown from all sides, gradually diminished their numbers, till at last, as one must believe, the survivors were wiped out in the forward rush of the foe. And then, the path across the "nek" being clear of all obstacle, the torrent of savagery poured down upon the camp to assist, from the rear, the attack that was being made in front. It was not by gunshot wounds that the defenders of the camp fell; the Zulu is a poor shot even at the best of times. The destroying weapon was the long-bladed assegai, a weapon as terrible in the hands of a Zulu as the two-edged broad sword in the hands of a Roman soldier. Sheer weight of numbers did the rest, and soon nothing was left of one half of the headquarter column save the handful of fugitives who managed, in many cases after hairbreadth escapes, to make their way through the waters of the swollen river to the Natal shore.

The catastrophe of the day, however, was not altogether without its redemption. On the Natal side of the drift across the Buffalo River a small force had been left in charge of stores not immediately required by the headquarter column. The force consisted of a company of the 2nd battalion of the South Wales Borderers, under the command

of Captain Bromhead. There were present also a few details of other branches of the service, including an officer of Engineers, an officer of the Commissariat Department, and a chaplain. In keeping with the fatal tactics that led to the loss of the camp at Isandhlwana, the post was entirely unfortified and could be easily commanded from the neighbouring hill. It included two buildings, one used as a commissariat store, and the other as a hospital, where a few invalids, chiefly fever cases, were under treatment. The tidings of disaster at the camp reached this station at Rorke's Drift in the afternoon. The position was undoubtedly a critical one. It seemed to be only in the nature of things that the Zulus, fresh from their successful attack upon the camp, would seek to follow up their advantage by an invasion of Natal. This important post, held by barely a hundred men, might find itself attacked by thousands of Zulus, rendered all the more confident by their recent victory. If the post were evacuated, the garrison—to call it so—might at least save their own lives. If, however, the post were evacuated, the one safe line of retreat for the remainder of the headquarter column might be destroyed, and the way left open for a disastrous invasion of British territory. The time allowed for arriving at a decision was short enough. It might be hours before the expected attack was made ; it might be only minutes. There was little disposition on the part of any of those present to order a retreat ; nevertheless, the risks involved in holding the post were serious. It is no discredit to men whose names were at the time in every one's mouth, and who received well-merited recognition of the part they played, to point out that the idea of utilising the commissariat

stores for the defence of the position originated with the commissariat officer, Assistant-Commissary Dalton, who was severely wounded in the affair and whose name was, at the time, entirely passed over. It was Mr. Dalton who first pointed out that a very tolerable breastwork could be constructed by piling up the numerous bags of mealies, and that boxes of biscuit could be used for the purpose of providing extra shelter by means of a traverse. The work was hastily and cheerfully taken in hand, and in a short time, though not a moment too soon, the post was placed in as good a state of defence as the circumstances allowed. The Zulu attack came, contrary to the instructions of Cetywayo, who had ordered that no offensive operations were to be attempted against British territory. The Zulus, after they had looted the camp, crossed the river several thousand strong and made a determined attack on the post at Rorke's Drift. The position of the defenders was, notwithstanding their preparations, perilous in the extreme, for the Zulus, ascending the hillside, were able to open a plunging fire on the post and succeeded, by means of flaming brands attached to assegais, in setting fire to the hospital building. The attack was continued through the greater part of the night, but, owing to the steadiness and courage of the defenders, was at every point repelled. Towards morning the Zulus drew off, leaving hundreds of their dead beneath the extemporised fortifications, and supplying a striking proof of the value of even the roughest kind of entrenchment against their onslaught. It would be impossible to speak too highly of the courage and determination shown by every man concerned in the defence, not the least remarkable instance of heroism being supplied by a private of

the South Wales Borderers who, entering the burning hospital under fire from the hill above, succeeded in rescuing, one after the other, the invalided men.

It was soon after daylight on the morning of the 23rd of January that Lord Chelmsford, with the remainder of his force, after a night spent in horror and alarm on the site of the plundered and silent camp, made his way back to the river drift. It is one of the singularities of the story that, as the depressed and fatigued column approached the river, though they were in full view of the Zulu force retiring from the assault on the post at Rorke's Drift, no attempt at attack was made on either side. The moment was one of cruel anxiety to both sections of the British forces—to the returning column, who were fully prepared to find the post destroyed and its defenders slaughtered, and to those defenders themselves, who at first, in the dim light of morning, mistook the British troops for a fresh Zulu army advancing to the attack. It would be unfair to take any serious note of the first utterances of men who met under such unexampled circumstances. It was enough that, for the moment, and in spite of the terrible tragedy at Isandhlwana, the position was saved. There had been no devastation of the Colony, and, in spite of their success, the Zulus had suffered losses which could not but have the effect of teaching them to be cautious. Apart from this, however, the results of the catastrophe were far-reaching. In addition to the alarm and horror created by the story of the greatest blow ever inflicted upon civilised forces in South Africa, the political results of the disaster were deeply felt not only in South Africa but in England. In South Africa the disaster meant the death-blow to the High Commissioner's reputa-

tion and to the confederation policy to which he was committed; in England it meant the collapse of that policy of Imperialism which had involved the country in the Afghan war, with its tragedies and its expense, and had led to the withdrawal from the Cabinet of some of its most respected members, including Lord Carnarvon himself. So far as the temper of military operations in South Africa was concerned, a spirit of unjustifiable and arrogant confidence was succeeded by a spirit of unjustifiable apprehension and timidity. In the capital of Natal itself, dominated as it was by the views of the highest officials, the feeling of funk—there is no other word so expressive—degenerated to a level that might almost have been characterised as mania. The arrival of an exterminating horde of Zulus, pouring in revenge across an utterly unprotected border, was a nightly vision, and it cannot be said that most of those who were responsible for the safety of a British Colony did anything that could serve to lessen the popular alarm. It is on record that the wife of a British officer, who was himself at that very time holding a beleaguered position in Zululand, was aroused one night by the arrival of a fatigue-party provided with a stretcher for the purpose of conveying her and her newly-arrived offspring to safe quarters within the walls of the gaol. It is also on record that the lady indignantly refused to accept the proffered protection.

The military position, as it was realised a few days after the Isandhlwana disaster, was anything but encouraging. The coast column was shut up at Etshowe, making the best of the defensive resources at its command. The remnants of the headquarter column were entrenched at a place known as Help-

makaar, a few miles from Rorke's Drift, on the Natal side. Sir Evelyn Wood's column was occupying a fortified camp at Kambula, in the north of Zululand, and expecting at any moment to be attacked by the whole Zulu army. Thus, while no impression of any kind had been made in Zululand, the whole of the Natal border, save for the native levies constituting the fourth column, was absolutely open to Zulu invasion. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that colonists in Natal, who at least had had no hand whatever in forcing on the war, should become nervous. That heavy reinforcements would be speedily despatched from England, and that no expense would be spared to obliterate the effect produced by the Isandhlwana disaster, no one doubted. But there was at that time no cable communication with Europe. The earliest intimation of the disaster itself only reached England after more than a fortnight's delay, and then the best that could be done was to instruct a homeward-bound mail-steamer to call at St. Vincent. Thus a period of several weeks would have to elapse before the Colony would be even in a fair state of defence, supposing that the Zulus were disposed to press the advantage they had gained. There can be no question that a vast amount of devastation could have been worked through a large portion of Natal if a powerful Zulu army had crossed the Tugela. All that the European population could have done would have been to shut themselves up in entrenched positions, leaving the country at large to be laid waste. In the capital itself a portion of the town was fortified as a laager, the ill-contrived arrangements of which would probably have been more fatal than a Zulu invasion, while the town was nightly patrolled by a volunteer municipal guard,

who, there is reason to believe, did once exercise their authority so far as to challenge an innocent Dutch farmer who had ridden into town to look for some missing cattle. As matters turned out, the Zulus made no kind of attack on the Colony, being restrained, there is the best reason for believing, by the express orders of their chief. As time went by, and the apprehensions that had arisen remained unfulfilled, it began to be seen that there was a humorous side to the exaggeration of alarm, the situation, from a Colonial point of view, being further lightened by the growing prospect of advantageous contracts for the supplying of the Imperial forces.

Before, however, the first of the reinforcements had arrived, attention was once more sharply drawn to the military possibilities of the situation by more than one unlucky occurrence. On the 12th of March an infantry detachment was surprised by the Zulus at the Intombi River, on the Zulu-Transvaal frontier, and cut off almost to a man, notwithstanding the precaution that had been taken as to the laagering of their wagons. The attacking party in this case were not really part of the Zulu army, but a predatory tribe who had for some years been a source of disquiet in the district. About a fortnight later occurred the disastrous affair at the Hlobane Mountain, in northern Zululand, when a considerable portion of the mounted force attached to Sir Evelyn Wood's column was surrounded by the army which was advancing to attack the British camp at Kambula, and suffered very serious loss. These unfortunate incidents, however, were perhaps more than counter-balanced by the decisive victory gained by Sir Evelyn Wood at Kambula, two days later, when the Zulus not only failed completely in their assault upon the

British position, but were repulsed with severe loss. The moral effect of this success was all the greater because it was gained by one of the original columns of invasion, and before the arrival of any reinforcements. When, early in April, sufficient reinforcements had arrived, the first step to be taken was the relief of the force imprisoned at Etshowe, which had been for more than two months cut off from all communication save such as could be accomplished by heliographing. In advancing into Zululand the second time, Lord Chelmsford adopted the precautions which would have saved him from disaster on the first occasion. The wagons accompanying the force were used for the formation of a laager, against which, on the occasion of the battle of Ginginhlovu, the Zulus hurled themselves in vain. Etshowe was relieved, and—which was by no means a necessary consequence—Zululand was evacuated.

A period of delay followed which, while it sorely tried the patience of the public both in South Africa and in England, had no very obvious justification. Further reinforcements had arrived, until the forces at the disposal of the general in command far exceeded in number any Imperial force that had ever been collected in South Africa. Stores were accumulated ; money was spent with an extravagance most acceptable to those who had anything that could be sold for military purposes. The one thing wanting was activity in respect of actual military operations. The same plan was followed of dividing the forces and invading Zululand from different points simultaneously. A column under Major-General Hope Crealock was to advance once more by way of the coast line, while the headquarter column, amalgamated with the original column

under Sir Evelyn Wood, was to enter Zululand from the north. The bases of the two columns were thus at least two hundred miles apart, while the whole Natal border still lay open to any force which the Zulus might think worth while to send across it. In the opinion of persons very competent to judge, the best route from the Natal border to Cetywayo's great place in the centre of Zululand was by way of Rorke's Drift and over the site of the ill-fated camp at Isandhlwana. There seemed, however, to be a rooted objection to the adoption of this line of march, and, as a matter of fact, no European visited the scene of the disaster of the 22nd of January till four months had passed, even though an offer had some time previously been made by Bishop Colenso to visit the spot and perform a service over the dead. When the site of the camp was at last visited, the story of the gallant attempt made by Colonel Durnford and the Natal Volunteers to hold the "nek" was eloquently told by the position of their remains, still recognisable in spite of four months' exposure to the weather. It is, perhaps, not altogether to be wondered at that Lord Chelmsford declined to march a second time into Zululand by way of Isandhlwana.

Still, however, the columns lingered on the verge of Zululand, and still money was being spent like water by the commissariat department. The inactivity of the coast column, in particular, became almost a public joke, the excuses for delay leaking out through the departments that, at least so far as the expenditure of money went, were doing their utmost to push the campaign forward. On the northern border of Zululand an immense park of wagons, several hundreds in number, had been

collected for the conveyance of supplies, and there can be no question that had the Zulus understood enough of the art of war to organise a plan for harassing the transport train, the campaign might have been prolonged for an indefinite period. When at last a forward movement was made by the main column, its advance was marked by a singular combination of timidity and rashness. The apprehension of sudden attack by the Zulus was the cause of more than one night alarm, almost amounting to panic, while the utter ignoring of ordinary scouting precautions resulted in the death of the Prince Imperial—an event that made almost as deep an impression as the disaster of the preceding January. The Zulus certainly were the most open and accommodating of foes, for it was Cetywayo's resolve to give the British forces exactly what they wanted—the opportunity for a single decisive engagement. But in the meantime the unlimited expenditure of money, with no result to show for it, was alarming the Ministry in England. It was resolved to despatch Lord Wolseley to supersede Lord Chelmsford, and by the beginning of July the new commander had actually arrived on the South African coast. It seems not improbable that Lord Wolseley's approach exercised an expediting effect upon the invading force, part of which—the coast column—had even then hardly moved from its base. Fortune, in a sense, proved kind to Lord Chelmsford. A delay experienced by Lord Wolseley in landing on the coast of Zululand gave Lord Chelmsford time to advance with his column into the immediate neighbourhood of Cetywayo's chief kraal at Ulundi. The battle of Ulundi, fought by the British troops formed up in

hollow square against a far superior force of the enemy, followed. The Zulus were totally defeated; Cetywayo became a fugitive; the royal kraals were burnt to the ground; and the Zulu war was practically at an end.

What remained to be done was first of all to secure the person of Cetywayo, and next to hit upon some plan for the settlement of Zululand. These matters were left entirely in the hands of Lord Wolseley, who, besides superseding Lord Chelmsford in the military command, superseded Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner, so far as South-Eastern Africa was concerned. It was some weeks before Cetywayo, who had betaken himself to the thickly wooded country in the direction of St. Lucia Bay, was discovered and captured, his removal to Capetown as a State prisoner speedily following. The settlement of Zululand was a matter not unattended with difficulty. Public feeling in England, indignant over the unauthorised betrayal of the country into the Zulu war, was altogether opposed to any proposal for annexation. At the same time, the removal of the central authority exercised by Cetywayo had left a vacuum which it was very difficult to fill. Proposals made for the reinstatement of Cetywayo under certain conditions and as a vassal of the British Government did not commend themselves to those in authority, though it is quite likely that such an arrangement, if put in force, would have worked fairly well. A scheme was at last suggested by Lord Wolseley, with the approval of Sir Henry Bulwer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, by which it was hoped that one portion of the Zulu nation might be utilised to keep the other portion in check. The country was

divided out into thirteen separate districts, over eleven of which leading Zulu chiefs were placed in authority. The two remaining districts, which bordered on Natal and included some of the best portions of Zululand, were placed respectively under a Basuto chief—Hlubi—who had rendered some service during the Zulu campaign, and the trader John Dunn, who, having been instrumental, to his own great profit, in arming the Zulu nation with guns, had transferred his services to the British side when war was determined on. That this rewarding of John Dunn at the expense of the Zulu people was a grave scandal there can be no doubt whatever. Public opinion in England, however, was tired of the whole subject, and willing to accept and approve anything that had the appearance of a settlement. It has been alleged that Lord Wolseley cynically referred to the new arrangements as likely to reproduce among the Zulus the legend of the Kilkenny cats ; certainly the disturbances that shortly resulted seemed to justify such a prediction. But, for the moment, the Zulu question was done with and shelved. The troops were rapidly withdrawn ; the immense accumulations of stores were disposed of at a mere fraction of their value ; and those colonists who had been lucky enough to enter into contracts with the Imperial commissariat department were left to congratulate themselves on the fact that, no matter who else had suffered in goods or in reputation, they at least had no cause to complain.

CHAPTER IV.

CONFEDERATION ON THE EBB.

IF the dismissal of the Molteno Ministry by Sir Bartle Frere might be said to mark the high tide of the policy of confederation, the catastrophe at Isandhlwana may certainly be said to have marked the beginning of its ebb. The shock caused by that catastrophe, involving as it did the virtual superseding of Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner, was perhaps all the more effective by reason of the fact that Lord Carnarvon, the originator of the policy of South African confederation, had retired from the Cabinet, leaving his work to the more practical and less enthusiastic hands of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. Even before the Isandhlwana tragedy the confederation scheme had received a considerable check through the House of Commons, which, mainly at the instigation of Mr. Parnell and his Nationalist supporters, had in 1877 restricted the action of the South Africa Act to a period of five years. It is not impossible that this restriction exercised some influence in inducing a desire to push confederation through with as much promptitude as possible. At any rate, however this may be, it could hardly be expected that the new Colonial Secretary, a man of prudent and practical counsels,

would feel the same interest in the scheme as had been felt by his predecessor in office.

But, besides the discouraging effect of the Isandhlwana tragedy, and the diminution of the official interest felt in England with regard to the confederation scheme, that scheme was receiving additional discouragement from the direction of the Transvaal. It was becoming plain to every one that the antagonism of the Transvaal burghers to the annexation was no myth, but a reality. In 1878 a second deputation, again headed by Mr. Kruger, had gone to England with a renewed and stronger protest, to receive from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach the same reply that the first deputation had received from Lord Carnarvon—that a reversal of the annexation was impossible. By a somewhat curious coincidence, this second deputation, returning to the Transvaal by way of Natal, arrived in that Colony during the period of suspense that elapsed between the opening of the Zulu campaign and the disaster of Isandhlwana. They had interviews with Sir Bartle Frere, which, so far as the High Commissioner was concerned, were of a temporising nature. They found also a strong sympathiser in Bishop Colenso, whose high sense of justice led him to condemn the Transvaal annexation as strongly as he condemned the Zulu war. With a not inconsiderable section of even the British colonists in South Africa, the manifest injustice of the treatment of the Zulus drew attention to the injustice of the annexation of the Transvaal. Those who had, like Mr. Saul Solomon, from the first taken up their parable against the whole scheme of confederation, began to find an increasing audience. The force of a moral objection to a policy in which violence

and injustice found so large a place began to be realised. Beyond all this, matters were not going well in the Transvaal itself. Whatever may have been Sir Theophilus Shepstone's defects as an administrator, he was at any rate a civilian, and a civilian, too, who possessed the power of talking to the burghers of the Transvaal in their own language. For reasons, however, which have never been made very clear, he was superseded, to be replaced by Colonel (afterwards Sir William) Lanyon. No more unfortunate appointment could have been conceived. As a military commander Colonel Lanyon doubtless was possessed of some capacity; for civil administration, however, he had no capacity whatever, and least of all for such a delicate and difficult position as existed in Pretoria. If annexation by Great Britain was odious to the Transvaal burghers, that annexation was rendered tenfold more odious when they found that it subjected them to the absolute rule of a British military officer, who was ignorant of their language and their ways, and whose appearance—the fact is not to be overlooked—suggested, whether correctly or not, some infusion of the blood of an inferior race.

By the time Lord Wolseley arrived in Natal, the ebb-tide of confederation was running rapidly. Although the result of the battle of Ulundi had done something to redeem Lord Chelmsford's military reputation, it was everywhere felt that the day for a "vigorous policy" had gone by. The spirit of the new policy was illustrated by the refusal, much to the discontent of a considerable section of the Natal colonists, to annex Zululand, and the parallel refusal to take any more steps for the subjugation of Pondoland. How far this policy

was dictated by regard for the principles of justice, and how far by regard for financial economy is, perhaps, an open question. The economical side of the situation was made sadly apparent to the colonists of Natal when it became known that they would be expected to contribute to the extent of at least a million sterling to the cost of the war. The contribution was afterwards cut down to a quarter of that amount, but the depressing influence of the claim, as at first made, was neither light nor unreal. Prior to Lord Wolseley's arrival, Sir Bartle Frere had left Natal for the Transvaal, where the nature of his interviews with the leaders of the protesting burghers led them to believe that he would plead their cause with the Imperial Government. Subsequently Sir Bartle Frere returned by way of Kimberley—where he endeavoured to obtain recruits to the flag of confederation—to Capetown, resolved, as it would seem, still to do his utmost to carry through a confederation policy. It has always been understood that it was on this ground, and in the pursuance of a wish to allow Sir Bartle Frere on opportunity of redeeming his great reputation, that, for the time being, he was left in the enjoyment, so far as the Cape Colony was concerned, of the offices on which he had entered two years before.

The interest of the moment, however, centred upon Lord Wolseley, who, by virtue of his appointment as High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa, exercised a supreme control over both Natal and the Transvaal. So clear had it by this time become that discontent, or even trouble of a more active kind, was to be looked for in the direction of the Transvaal, that a leading member of Lord Wolseley's staff was openly asked, while in the

Natal capital, whether, in the event of such trouble arising, they intended to treat the Transvaal burghers as belligerents or rebels. The answer returned—"As neither"—seemed to indicate that while Lord Wolseley was alive to the risks of the situation, he was undecided as to the course to be adopted in respect of a very delicate question. At the moment, however, this question did not arise. The first duties that fell to Lord Wolseley were of purely a military kind. After the hasty settlement of Zululand under its thirteen kinglets, some work of native subjugation had to be accomplished in the Transvaal. It did not, perhaps, so very much matter that the chief Sekukuni had, in 1876, defied the efforts made to dislodge him by a commando of Transvaal burghers. His importance had been increased when, in 1878, a British column had been compelled to fall back before coming to close quarters. Sekukuni had to be dealt with, and with this object in view Lord Wolseley collected a powerful force in the Lydenburg district of the Transvaal towards the close of 1879. Before, however, proceeding in that direction, measures were taken with the unruly chief, Umbeline, who, from his rocky fastnesses on the Zulu-Transvaal border, was responsible for the disaster, in the preceding March, to the British detachment encamped by the Intombi River. Umbeline and his men were driven into their strongholds, which were then subjected to the destructive forces of dynamite, with what amount of loss, to combatants or non-combatants, no one, probably, took much trouble to inquire. With the assistance of a powerful contingent of Swazies the subjugation of Sekukuni soon followed. It is perhaps useless to revive, after this lapse of

time, the sharp controversy that arose as to the treatment of captured combatants and non-combatants by the Swazie contingent. The same question arose as to the treatment of the Zulu prisoners and wounded after the battle of Ulundi, and has arisen again in more recent times in connection with the Chartered Company's invasion of Matabeleland. All that can be said is, that while denials are natural on one side, the allegations of fact remain on the other.

These military trifles being cleared out of the way, the field was once more open for the consideration of the problem involved in the state of affairs in the Transvaal. Lord Wolseley, it is only just to say, was never under any delusion on the subject. In despatches that were subsequently made public he gravely assured the Imperial authorities that unless a powerful military force was maintained in the Transvaal there was no hope of retaining that country under British rule. The Transvaal burghers, however, were still patient, because, it may be believed, they saw a likelihood in the near future of such changes in the balance of parties in England as would enable them to secure a peaceable settlement of their grievances. With the view of still further smoothing the way, their leaders issued a manifesto in which, conditional upon the restoration of Transvaal independence, important concessions were offered to British policy, including a willingness to consider the question of South African confederation, and to consult British feeling with regard to native affairs. At the same time they lost no opportunity of impressing their views upon the Dutch population of the Cape Colony—men of the same stock with themselves, and who shared with

them the same bitter inheritance of the memory of former acts of British persecution. So effectual was their appeal to their sympathisers in the Cape Colony that the Sprigg Ministry, anxious though it was to meet Sir Bartle Frere's views in every way, had, during the Parliamentary Session of 1880, to confess itself beaten on the confederation question, and reluctantly compelled to adopt the policy of their predecessors in office. Confederation in South Africa, for which Sir Bartle Frere had risked so much, was dead. And, being dead in South Africa, no one in England was much concerned in keeping it alive.

Before, however, the fate of confederation was finally sealed in South Africa, by the failure of the Sprigg Ministry to secure a Parliamentary majority in its favour, occurrences had taken place in England which appeared to justify the action of the Transvaal burghers in waiting upon the course of events. Anticipating the approaching dissolution of Parliament through the lapse of time, the Beaconsfield Ministry had, early in the year, made an appeal to the country. The result was astonishing even to the most sanguine of Liberals. The disgust and discontentment awakened by the adventures and failures of the Beaconsfield Ministry—adventures which were costly in a financial sense, and failures still more costly by reason of the wounds they inflicted upon national self-esteem—had prepared the way for probably the most spontaneous, and certainly the most sweeping, of party reactions ever known in British history. The slaughter among the ranks of Conservatives was appalling. Borough after borough and county after county yielded to the Liberal attack, and long before the elections were completed it had become clear

that the doom of the Beaconsfield Administration was sealed. In British South Africa this shifting of the political centre of gravity was viewed with surprise ; by the Transvaal burghers and their Dutch friends throughout the South African Continent it was hailed with delight. It had been from the Liberal party that the leaders of the protesting Transvaal burghers had received sympathy and support, and though the chiefs of the party had been careful not to commit themselves too far on the subject, there seemed every reason to believe that at last, under the Liberal Government, the wrong of the annexation might be undone. It was not long, however, before it was found that such a hope was not to be realised. The question, no doubt, was considered when the Liberal Ministry, with Lord Kimberley in his old place at the Colonial Office, first met. There were, however, more pressing questions, questions lying nearer home, that claimed attention, and to which any reopening of the Transvaal question had to be postponed. Besides this, it had been seriously represented by Sir Bartle Frere, who still remained in office in Capetown, that, owing to the increase of the British population in the Transvaal since the annexation, a reversal of that act would inevitably lead to a Civil War in which the interests of the whole country, and British interests most of all, would suffer. Fortified by arguments of this kind, the natural conservatism of a public department rendered the Colonial Office content to leave the matter alone. The Transvaal burghers found that both their protests and their patience had been thrown away. True, the new Ministry, feeling bound to do something to satisfy public feeling, recalled Sir Bartle Frere, on

the ground that as there was now no hope of the principle of confederation being accepted by the Cape Colony, his special mission to South Africa was at an end. The military *régime* at Pretoria, with Colonel Lanyon at its head, continued in full force. It became merely a question of months and weeks as to when the disappointed burghers of the Transvaal would rise in open revolt.

In the meantime, as if to show that the grim catalogue of evils imported into South Africa in the wake of Lord Carnarvon's confederation policy was not exhausted, a war had broken out between the Cape Government and the Basutos. The cause of that war is easy to be traced. For more than ten years—ever since, in fact, their defeat by the burgher forces of the Orange Free State—the Basutos had been the favoured native children of the British Government. Their loyalty was regarded as beyond question; their fighting qualities had been fully proved. Through the fact that large numbers of them had gone to work at the Kimberley mines they had become very generally possessed of firearms. It was part of the theory of native alarm that was so closely mixed up with the policy of confederation that natives ought not to be possessed of firearms. The argument against the possession of firearms by natives in South Africa is really very much overstrained. It is true, possibly, that the possession of guns may tempt a native tribe into revolt. But, when once in the field, a native armed with a gun is far less formidable than a native armed with assegais. With a gun he is usually a bad shot, and, as he does not understand the sighting, the better the gun the worse shot he is likely to be. It was with assegais and not with guns that the slaughter at Isandhlwana

was accomplished. In the following, however, of the dread of firearms in the hands of natives, the Cape Parliament, led by Sir Gordon Sprigg, and at the suggestion of Sir Bartle Frere, had passed an Arms Act, under the provisions of which all guns in the hands of natives were to be surrendered by a given day. The Basutos, in spite of their proved loyalty, were included in the demand. They refused to comply with it. By a narrow majority in the Cape House of Assembly it was resolved to enforce the demand. So unpopular was such a step in England, where public opinion was sick of native wars in South Africa, that the Cape Government was given to understand that if it insisted on prosecuting a war with the Basutos, it would not have the support of either a single Imperial soldier or, as far as great Britain was concerned, a single three-penny-piece. The warning, however, was thrown away. Volunteers were enrolled; burgher forces were called out; immense sums were spent out of the Colonial Treasury for stores, horses, and munitions of war. The war, instead of being speedily brought to a conclusion, dragged on for months. At almost every point the Colonial forces were baffled; and at last, after an expenditure which was found to add up to a total of four millions sterling, the Colonial Government, its aim still unaccomplished, was constrained to make terms with the very race which had been totally, though after a severe struggle, defeated by the Free State burghers not much more than ten years before.

Surely an object-lesson not without its significance !

CHAPTER V.

THE TRANSVAAL WAR.

IN dealing with the most momentous of South African incidents of the last twenty years, it is desirable, first of all, to arrive at some estimate of the nature of the forces involved. It has already been pointed out that the annexation of the Transvaal was the direct result of a new policy which aimed at Imperial expansion, and which upset, in a moment, arrangements that had worked satisfactorily for a quarter of a century. Those arrangements dated from the signing of the Sand River Convention in 1852, when the independent rights of the then newly-founded South African Republic were recognised, and those who had founded it were, with perfect goodwill, left to the direction of their own destinies.

It is true that Sir Bartle Frere, in his interview with the protesting burghers in 1879, argued that if they went back to the Sand River Convention they might as well go back to the creation of the world. Such an expression in the mouth of a representative of British authority was not a happy one, and compared ill (say) with recent acts of British Administrations, to the detriment of British colonists in Newfoundland, out of regard to a

treaty concluded with France at the beginning of last century. It will surely seem obvious that it is not the mere fact of the signing of a convention that is to be taken into account, but also the period during which and the manner in which a convention has been acted on and observed. Looking at the position in this way, and seeing that for twenty-five years the conditions of the Sand River Convention had been observed on both sides, the Transvaal burghers, in protesting against the annexation, were justified in regarding that convention as guaranteeing their independence. If they had not been in all respects well governed—and there can be little doubt that the administration of President Burgers was too adventurous and speculative for the then conditions of the country—that was their own affair. If foreign Powers possessed the right to intervene in the affairs of any State which, in their estimation, did not seem to be well governed, the whole fabric of international comity would suffer wreck.

In order, however, to understand the situation properly, it is necessary to go some way back beyond the date of the Sand River Convention. The South African problem is not altogether a simple one, even though by no means so complicated as some would seem anxious to believe. In order to get at the key to it, it is not necessary, indeed, to go back to the creation of the world; but it is very necessary to go back to the time when the British flag was first planted on the fortifications at Cape-town. It is necessary to go back to the opening years of the present century, when, with the general consent of the European Powers, Great Britain was confirmed in the possession of the originally Dutch Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. This Dutch

Colony, first founded in the interests of the Dutch East India Company, yet contained within it a certain foreign and uncommercial element, which has played a most important part in the political history of South Africa. It was at the Cape of Good Hope, upwards of two centuries ago, that a large section of the Huguenot refugees, to whom England itself is indebted for some of its highest intellectual effort, found a resting-place, and at this day their names, often, it is true, strangely metamorphosed, are to be found in positions of honour throughout the South African Continent. In the days when the possession of the Cape of Good Hope was confirmed to Great Britain colonies were valued by British Governments from a purely military point of view. It was only some forty years ago, when the great Australian Colonies were expanding into their present magnificence, that Colonial affairs, which till then had been dealt with by a branch of the War Office, were regarded as worthy of the attention of a separate department of State.

It was in the following of this earlier tradition that the British Colony at the Cape of Good Hope was, in the first instance, merely a military station, controlled by military authorities, who knew as little as possible, and cared even less, about the original settlers. The story of the conflicts between the military authorities and these original settlers, and between the military authorities and the British-born colonists who were attracted to the Cape, form an exciting and interesting chapter in South African history, in which the deeply tragic is oddly mixed up with the irresistibly comic. The main fact, however, on which attention has to be fixed is the existence, in the early decades of the present century, of a hardy and independent

body of settlers in South Africa, hedged in on one side by British authority, which they grudgingly acknowledged, and on the other side by masses of armed savagery, constantly threatening to overrun and wipe out their efforts after civilised life.

The existence of such a body of settlers, under such conditions, is one of the main facts that has to be kept in mind in connection with any study of South African history, for in this fact will be found the key to much that has happened in more recent years. But it has to be specially kept in mind in connection with what is really the greatest event in South African history—the famous “trek” of Cape farmers some sixty years ago. It is owing to the acts and the sufferings of these “emigrant farmers,” as they are usually called, that there is to-day any civilised continent known by the name of South Africa. There were two causes that more immediately led to the great emigration which set in about the year 1835. One was the ruin brought upon hundreds of families by the miscarriage of the arrangements for compensating Cape Colony farmers for the liberation of their slaves. No one at this day will find fault with the wave of strong national feeling that broke the fetters of slavery in every part of the British Empire ; but there was no need for the business to be so mismanaged that slave-holders in the Cape Colony, where slavery was a kind of patriarchal institution, found themselves in receipt of not more than a tenth or twelfth part of the compensation they had been promised. It was the ruin inflicted by this mismanagement that left to hundreds of farmers no alternative but to relinquish their farms and trek into this wilderness. And, over and above this ruin, there was the profound discontentment

awakened, and the grave danger created, by what is always spoken of in South Africa as "the Glenelg policy"—the policy by which, at the end of a life and death conflict between the farmers and the surrounding masses of warlike natives—between civilisation and savagery—the work achieved by the forces of civilisation was undone, and the natives reinstated on the lands of which they had been deprived by the fortune of war.

The story of the great exodus of the emigrant farmers is no new one. It has been told more than once, but it would be difficult to tell it too often. The conviction may be expressed that there are few things in the whole history of mankind so pathetic, so heart-stirring, as this story of the men who, with their wives and their little ones, abandoned everything that could be called a home, and set forth into an unknown wilderness, literally not knowing whither they went. Those who know South Africa as it is now, when the mail-train carries its passengers in luxurious comfort across the arid plains and between the stony ridges, can, perhaps, if they take the trouble, best realise what South Africa north of the Orange River was in the days when Paul Kruger, then a boy of some ten or eleven years, took part with his family in the movement that, through the intervention of the great Providence of nations, was to result in the laying of the foundations of civilised rule throughout the South African Continent. There is probably no event in modern history more worthy to form the subject of a great epic. Some day, perhaps, that epic will be written. And possibly some day, too, when the political wirepuller has ceased from troubling and the speculator is at rest, South Africa, rising up in gratitude and admiration, will

erect a national monument to the memory of the founders of South Africa as it is now known. Possibly that monument might find a place on the summit of the Colesberg Mountain—there are few spots that could be more fitting—near the birthplace of the man who, whatever his shortcomings, must always be regarded as one of the greatest of South Africans—near the birthplace of Paul Kruger, and looking across the Orange River into the vast countries which the inward faith and outward endurance of the emigrant farmers “carved from the waste, and kindled with a soul.”

The political result of their courage and endurance are before the world in the founding of three South African States, and in the breaking and dissipating of the power of the fierce and warlike races who were previously in possession of the soil. The Orange River Free State was the first political outcome of the enterprise of the emigrant farmers. The founding of the South African Republic followed, involving the overthrow, after a desperate conflict, of the power of the great chief Mosilikatze. It was another branch of the emigration that, descending the eastern slopes of the Drakensberg, founded the Republic—now, owing to the British influences that poured in from the sea-coast, the Colony—of Natal. Here the conflict with the power of the main body of the Zulu race was even sharper than in the Transvaal. Treachery and most tragic massacre swept away many of the bravest of the emigrants, together with their families. Only within the last few years there died in Natal an elderly lady, who, as a child, had been left for dead, pierced by more than a dozen assegai wounds by the Zulu exterminators. It was in connection with this settlement in Natal that the

marvellous victory was won in the year 1838, when, on the banks of the Blood River, in northern Zululand, four hundred of the farmers, including old men and mere boys, armed with the most antiquated of muskets, scattered and put to flight fifteen thousand Zulus, and secured, once and for ever, the dominance of the white race in all South Africa lying outside the then narrow boundaries of the Cape Colony. It need not surely be matter for surprise that the anniversary of this famous battle—the 16th of December, known as “Dingaan’s Day”—is regarded by the descendants of the emigrant farmers as a national festival.

Some twenty years, more or less, after the first beginning of the trek of the emigrant farmers, a glimpse may be had of South Africa as determined by the influence of that event, and as presenting geographical features more or less existent at the present moment. It is surely a thing peculiarly creditable to the influence of Liberal principles in Great Britain, that the realisation of the existence of a Colonial Empire, requiring the care of a special department of State, should have been coincident with the clear recognition of constitutional rights in British Colonies, and of national rights in the Republics of South Africa. It was in 1854 that Colonial affairs were withdrawn from the control of the War Office, and placed in the charge of a separate Secretary of State for the Colonies. Coincident with this change, free forms of government were bestowed on the great Australian communities, while the gift of “representative institutions” was granted to the Cape Colony and Natal—to the former in 1854, to the latter in 1856. About the same time, and doubtless in the following of the very same policy, the

status of the two Republics in South Africa—the South African Republic or Transvaal, and the Orange Free State—was definitely settled. In 1852 the complete independence of the South African Republic was recognised by the document known as the Sand River Convention. In 1854 Great Britain finally withdrew all claims to sovereignty in the Orange Free State, and left the people of that State free to guide their own fortunes. All this is nothing new, but it has to be remembered if any correct estimate is to be formed with regard to the effect produced by the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877. The annexation appeared to the burghers in the Transvaal, and indeed to the whole Dutch population throughout South Africa, as a wanton and unwarranted departure from a policy which had held good for a quarter of a century—a departure involving the re-establishment of all those evils, including subjection to the absolute control of a British military officer, from which the founders of the Republic had sought to escape. The step was as grievous to the scripturally disposed minds of Transvaal burghers as would have been the re-establishment of Egyptian tyranny over Israelites who, having crossed the Red Sea, imagined that they were beyond the reach of Pharaoh and his taskmasters. Smarting under the grievance, they had protested. Confident in the righteousness of their cause, they had been patient. Both their protests and their patience had been of no avail; their friends in England had apparently deserted them; and the only thing left was to commit their cause to the doubtful arbitrament of armed revolt.

The revolt began, as so many revolts have begun, over an attempt on the part of the Government to

enforce taxation. The payment of taxes by the burghers under protest had been officially interpreted as implying their consent to the annexation. This interpretation revealed to them the necessity for making their real position understood by a refusal to be taxed. The economic pinch that followed upon the lavish expenditure of the Zulu war was being sharply felt, and it was not in the nature of things that a Liberal Administration would be content to regard the Transvaal as other than a self-supporting community. Whatever might be the belief privately entertained by the Executive in Pretoria, that Executive, since the change of Ministry in England, had never ceased to represent the Transvaal burghers as satisfied with British rule. If that was the case, then, in the estimation of Ministers in London, there could be and should be no difficulty in collecting by taxation the revenue necessary for the civil administration of the country. The Executive in Pretoria naturally felt obliged to act up to the facts of the position as they had represented it. When taxes were refused, an effort had to be made to enforce them. The very first attempt in this direction put the match to the revolutionary mine. On the wagon of one Bezuidenhout being seized in satisfaction of taxes alleged to be due, the Transvaal burghers rose as one man. The wagon was forcibly but quietly rescued from the custody of the sheriff, and a proclamation was printed at a newspaper office in Potchefstroom, the old capital of the Republic, asserting the independence of the country and naming a Provisional Government. The occasion was signalled by a ceremony which was marked by all the picturesque impressiveness of some scrip-

tural incident. The day was the 16th of December, the anniversary of that famous victory over the Zulu nation, by which peace and security had been achieved for the Republic. The thousands of burghers who had assembled in response to the call of their leaders on the first news of the resolve to take up arms, singly and individually took an oath, in the memory of the victory vouchsafed to them more than forty years previously, not to lay down their arms till they had recovered the independence of their country, each man, as his oath was taken, throwing a stone on to a heap. At this gathering, which took place on the farm known as Paardekraal, the revolt was launched, and it remained with the British authorities to meet it as best they could.

Patient as the Transvaal burghers had been, and desirous of avoiding, if possible, all risk of bloodshed, there can be no doubt that their plan of operations had been agreed upon for some time previously, and that each man among them had prepared himself, as far as possible, for the struggle that might come at any moment. Living as they did in complete ignorance of all that was passing in the country districts, hearing nothing that was being said among the farming population, the heads of the Government in Pretoria had not the least notion that, for many months past, every Transvaal burgher had been collecting ammunition and storing it in the box in front of his wagon. It can hardly be said that the burghers were as well supplied with ammunition as the British regiments, though there can be no doubt that in some cases they were better armed. As for their plan of campaign, it was simple and effective. All British garrisons were to be be-

leaguered in their several stations, and the roads into the country were to be so held as to prevent the arrival of reinforcements. The plan was instantly carried out, so far as the British troops at Potchefstroom were concerned. Together with a few British residents, they were closely besieged in a fortified position, and were absolutely cut off from all communication with the outer world till an armistice was signed three months later. The Republican headquarters were established at Heidelberg, about sixty miles south of Pretoria, on the main road towards the Natal border, while a powerful force was disposed so as to form a cordon round Pretoria, at about six miles distant from the town. In the meantime a force was sent southwards to occupy the passes into Natal, the only direction from which it was at all likely that British reinforcements could be despatched. Certainly there could be no succour by way of the Free State, whose burghers were quietly but actively lending assistance to their brethren in the Transvaal. As for the chances of British reinforcements from the Cape Colony side, they were small enough. Not to speak of the immense distances and physical difficulties to be encountered by that route, the feeling among the Dutch population of the Cape Colony was anything but adverse to the cause of Transvaal independence. It was indeed whispered, and very generally believed, that if any attempt had been made to employ the Cape lines of railway, incomplete as they were, for the forwarding of British reinforcements to the Transvaal, the railway bridges would have been destroyed by the sympathisers with the Transvaal revolt. Natal, being more directly under the authority of the Crown, and its European population being more

largely British, it naturally, and apart from geographical conditions, became the base of any military operations undertaken with the view of upholding British authority in the Transvaal.

To those who were sincerely interested in the peace and prosperity of South Africa, the prospect of the impending conflict brought the direst dismay. It was plain to those, too, who were best acquainted with the general state of feeling throughout the country, that a war waged by Transvaal burghers against British troops for the recovery of their independence, had behind it the possibility, or rather probability, of a civil war between the Dutch and the English races throughout South Africa. An effort was made by colonists in Capetown, representing both British and Dutch interests, to bring matters into a negotiable position before both sides were committed to actual hostilities. Sir Bartle Frere had left for England some time before, and the offices of Governor and High Commissioner were being temporarily filled by Sir George Strahan, who had just retired from a governorship in the West Indies, and was naturally dependent to a very large extent on the views of his Ministry, headed by Sir Gordon Sprigg. A most influential deputation endeavoured to arrange a meeting with the Premier, who—possibly through an incapacity to realise the seriousness of the situation, possibly through his having been indoctrinated with the views of Sir Bartle Frere—did not take much trouble to meet it. An interview, however, did take place, at which sundry suggestions were made, one of the most practical, perhaps, being a suggestion that Sir John de Villiers, the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, and a man deservedly possessing the esteem of both

the Dutch and British population, should be sent up to the Transvaal on behalf of the British Government, to try and effect an amicable settlement. The deputation, influential as it was, received but a cold reception from Sir Gordon Sprigg, through whom its suggestions were conveyed to Sir George Strahan. His appreciation of the situation, as represented to him, is to be gathered from the fact that, although the Colonial Office could then be communicated with by cable in a few hours, he put the recommendations of the deputation in an envelope, and posted them by the ordinary weekly mail-steamer.

Thus, owing to the cynical indifference of a Colonial Premier, and want of grasp on the part of a Colonial Governor, the very thing which all responsible persons were anxious to avoid—an actual collision between the British troops and the Transvaal burghers—took place. There is a direct and intimate connection between what passed at Capetown and the circumstances of the first engagement between the contending parties in the Transvaal. Some little time previous to the declaration of their independence by the Transvaal burghers, a wing of the 94th Regiment, which was stationed at Lydenburg, in the north-east of the Transvaal, had received orders to return to Pretoria. Rumours were already afloat of some hostile movement on the part of the burghers, and were characteristically laughed to scorn by those in military command. "The Boers," the officer in command of the 94th had been heard to say, "would turn tail at the first beat of the big drum." From a military point of view, no doubt this concentration of British troops in the Transvaal was highly desirable. From a military

point of view, the Transvaal burghers were bound, if possible, to prevent such concentration. A force of burghers, whose leaders were perfectly well informed as to all military movements on the other side, was sent from Heidelberg to oppose the march of the Lydenburg column. They took up their position in close proximity to the drift across a not very considerable stream, known as Bronkhorst Spruit. It has been sometimes said that they entrenched themselves in a fortified position among rocks overlooking the road, and that they even measured the distances to the spot where the British troops were likely to pass. These statements are absolute fiction. The country thereabouts is open and gently undulating, and the only thing to mark the spot is a row of thorn trees which may still be seen, at a distance of about a mile, from the line of railway to Delagoa Bay. As for measuring the distance, not only are Transvaal marksmen under no necessity for taking such a precaution, but it will be clear that, in view of a probable attack upon a force extended for some distance along the road, the precaution, even if taken, would have been useless. The real meaning of the situation was made perfectly apparent in the letter handed, under cover of a flag of truce, to the officer commanding the British troops. The letter stated that, as the burghers still entertained the hope of coming to some arrangement with the British Government, the Provisional Government of the burghers in arms trusted that the column might be halted, pending the reply to the representations that had been made to the High Commissioner. That letter, in fact, was expressive of a sincere desire to avoid bloodshed, and to arrive at a peaceable issue, and there can be

little doubt that, if in Capetown there had been present a clearer perception of the seriousness of the situation, even then bloodshed might have been averted, and much bitterness saved on both sides.

In the absence of any instructions superseding those in pursuit of which he had marched out of Lydenburg, the officer in command of the British force answered, as probably any one in his position only could have answered, that his orders were to go to Pretoria, and that by those orders he intended to abide. The situation, therefore, was immediately narrowed down to a simple military issue. The British force intended to proceed to Pretoria—if it could; the burgher forces intended to prevent this—if they could. How that issue was to be decided was not very long left in doubt. A steady and accurate fire, by men long accustomed to careful shooting, was at once opened upon the British column, which in half an hour had suffered such serious loss, including the greater number of its officers, that a surrender became imperative. When once the surrender took place, the wounded were treated by the Transvaal burghers with the greatest humanity. The farmers resident in the vicinity, staunch Republicans though they were, did their utmost, and a messenger was allowed to proceed to Pretoria to bring out medical assistance. It seems advisable to allude to these facts, as there still seem to be those who think that the natural sting of a defeat can be lessened by alluding to it as a massacre. It should be enough that the verdict of one of the most distinguished of British officers—Sir Evelyn Wood—as expressed in the presence of a mixed company of military officers and civilians less than a year after the occurrence, was summed up in five words—"It was a fair fight."

The surprise and consternation excited in England when the news of the Bronkhorst Spruit affair was published, were extreme. The consternation was rather, perhaps, of a political than of a military character. There was no doubt felt that, with the aid of a force sufficiently powerful, British authority could be reasserted over the Transvaal. The consternation was rather caused by the reflection that not only was the legacy of trouble left by the preceding Administration still unexhausted, but that a Liberal Government had carelessly allowed itself to be placed in a position involving the choice of one of two most distasteful alternatives. Either it would have to undertake the work of reconquering the Transvaal at enormous expense, or it would have to undo the blunder of the annexation. If the latter course were adopted, Ministers would be liable to be charged with cowardice and want of Imperial grip by their political opponents; if the former course were adopted, they would be committed to a war which could hardly be the reverse of odious, and which might well give rise to a far more extended conflict, one of the possibilities of which was the loss of South Africa. Never was a Ministry placed in so awkward a dilemma, and never would a Colonial Secretary have been more justified in invoking maledictions on the heads of those officials in South Africa who, in assuring him that the Transvaal burghers were settling down under British rule, had so grossly misrepresented the situation. It did not tend to make matters better that Mr. Gladstone, whose habit of concentrating his attention upon one political question at a time has always been understood, was just then engaged in endeavouring to reconcile his own desire to

give Ireland a satisfactory Land Act with the burning wish of some of his colleagues to lock up all Irishmen who were convinced that a Land Act was necessary. Hence the handling of matters in South Africa fell into the hands of Lord Kimberley, who, in spite of powerful Radical influences brought to bear upon him, was largely under the domination of that gentle optimism, so characteristic of the Colonial Office, under which the belief is entertained that everything will come right if you only manage to avoid doing anything that can be called remarkable. It was while this state of administrative paralysis was in the ascendant that the suggestions from Capetown, which Sir George Strahan had posted to England, came under Lord Kimberley's notice. There was only one thing then to be said about them—they were "inopportune." Had Sir George Strahan thought it worth while to make use of the cable, they might have been opportune enough.

In the meantime, so far as British interests in South Africa were concerned, the chief responsibility rested with Sir George Colley, who, on Lord Wolseley's return to England, had been appointed Governor and High Commissioner over Natal and the Transvaal, with Colonel Lanyon acting under him in Pretoria as Administrator. It is less than just to say that Sir George Colley, who had proved himself, as Governor of Natal, a most able and popular Administrator, from the very first moment realised what may be called the true inwardness of the position, and spared no pains to limit and circumscribe the irritations almost inseparable from such a war as had broken out. Whether as a soldier he deserves to be called successful, is a matter by itself; but there can be no doubt that by his high

regard for humane considerations, and his sincere wish for the future peace and prosperity of the South African Continent, he merited, by his action at that time, the profoundest gratitude of all who regard domestic contentment and international goodwill as the symbols of successful administration. It would have been easy for a Governor who took a purely military view of the situation to have stirred up British feeling in Natal, and to have dragged that Colony into the conflict. Realising, however, that, whatever happened, Natal colonists and Transvaal burghers would have to live side by side, Sir George Colley used his influence to make it appear that the quarrel was between the Transvaal burghers and the Imperial Government only, and that a comparative neutrality on the part of colonists was in no sense irreconcilable with their status as British subjects. It is possible, too, though of this there does not seem to be any ground for more than a suspicion, that Sir George Colley, actuated by the high conscientiousness which always distinguished him, was not unconscious of some degree of self-reproach in respect of the situation that had arisen. When Lord Wolseley was in Natal in 1875, Sir George Colley, as a member of his staff, had paid a confidential visit to Pretoria, as another member of the staff had paid a confidential visit to Bloemfontein, for the purpose of ascertaining, as far as possible, the probable prospect of the Transvaal burghers consenting to come under the British flag. It has always been easy for those who visit Transvaal towns to be misled as to the feeling prevalent in the country districts, and no doubt Sir George Colley was thus misled into reporting favourably as to the prospect of the acceptance of British rule in the South African Republic.

It was largely upon his report that the annexation policy was founded, and it is not difficult to imagine that, to a nature so sensitive as his, the task of being set to work to deal with the results of a blunder to which he had himself been a party was no pleasant one.

But, whatever may have been Sir George Colley's private feelings, there was no hesitation on his part in taking what steps the military situation seemed to demand, so far as the forces at his disposal would allow. Whatever Imperial troops were in garrison at Pietermaritzburg were moved up as rapidly as possible to Newcastle, the Natal township nearest to the border, from whence they were thrown still further forward to the camp at Mount Prospect, some fifteen miles nearer to the Transvaal frontier. The Colony of Natal here narrows up into a not very extensive triangle, hemmed in by the Free State frontier on the north-west, and the upper waters of the Buffalo River, which just there lies in a deep depression, on the north-east, a line running due north and south up the middle of the triangle more or less marking the direction of the main road from Newcastle to the point where, at the very apex of the triangle, it emerges on to Transvaal territory. The scenery in this triangle is picturesque in the extreme. Following the old wagon road from Newcastle, which lies somewhat in a hollow, for about twelve miles, and after toiling up a long and steep ascent, the eminence known as Schuins Hoogte—itself the scene of one of the actions in which Sir George Colley was engaged—is reached, its summit strewn with curiously projecting flat rocks, at a distance almost having the appearance of upright tombstones. Looking northward from Schuins

Hoogte a magnificent view is obtained. Immediately in the foreground the ground slopes down to a level grassy plain, about a mile in extent, beyond which can be traced the deep course of the Ingogo River, originating in the Drakensberg mountains, that form the boundary between Natal and the Free State. Beyond the river the ground slopes upwards for a considerable distance, through dark masses of timber, high above which rises the massive outline of the mountain known as Inkwelo, beyond which again, and forming part of the same range, though sharper in outline and somewhat less in height, stands Amajuba. Extending eastward from the slopes of Amajuba runs the lower range, the depression in which is known by the name of Laing's Nek—now penetrated by a railway tunnel—and which, a little further to the eastward, falls steeply down to the bed of the Buffalo River. The site of Sir George Colley's camp, named Mount Prospect from a small roadside inn, is still to be traced on a somewhat lower ridge about midway between Schuins Hoogte and Laing's Nek, its distinguishing feature to this day being the cypress trees in the enclosure round Sir George Colley's grave.

As will readily be perceived, the nature of the ground was such as to afford, to any force holding the pass across Laing's Nek, an almost unrivalled defensive position against troops advancing from Natal. Over that pass anything in the shape of a military column had to go. The mountainous boundary of the Free State prevented any deviation towards the west; the deep valley of the Buffalo prevented any deviation towards the east. The Transvaal forces, penetrating some five or six miles into Natal territory, formed an encampment under

the ridge crossed by the Nek, and on the west side of the route now taken by the railway between the Laing's Nek tunnel and the Transvaal border. From this camp they completely commanded the pass, and could, from the higher ground in front of their position, obtain almost a bird's-eye view of any movement on the part of the British forces. Still, no matter how strong their position, the duty rested with Sir George Colley to force it, if possible, with the view of relieving the beleaguered garrisons in the Transvaal. Towards the end of January, 1881, the British force available at Mount Prospect was sufficient, in Sir George Colley's estimation, to justify him in making an attack on the pass. The plan of attack was to shell the Transvaal burghers out of the position they had taken up near the summit of the ridge to the eastward of the high-road over the Nek, and to follow this up by an infantry assault in front. Owing to the cover secured by the Transvaal forces, the artillery fire, though well directed, was practically ineffective, while the mounted portion of Sir George Colley's force, in endeavouring to create a diversion on the extreme left of the enemy's position, found it so strongly held that they were compelled to retire with considerable loss. The infantry attack in front also failed. The ground was so steep, and so completely exposed to the accurate fire of the defenders, that not only did the attacking forces suffer very heavy loss—including the commanding officer, Colonel Deane—in ascending the hill, but were, on arriving at the summit, too much fatigued for any effectual charge. The British troops, sadly thinned by casualties, retired to their camp at Mount Prospect, leaving the burgher forces in possession of their original position. So heavy had been the

losses of the day that the senior officer in command of one infantry regiment—the 58th—held no higher rank than that of lieutenant.

From a military point of view, however, the full danger of Sir George Colley's position had not yet been realised. It was mortifying that he had failed to force a passage over Laing's Nek. It was something more than mortifying when the Transvaal burghers, taking advantage of their capacity for rapid movement, passed round the British position, and cut off Sir George Colley from his base at Newcastle. This was in the first week of February, 1881, the movement of the burgher forces round to the British general's rear not merely illustrating their confidence in their own fighting and manœuvring powers, but suggesting that they were receiving assistance, directly or indirectly, from beyond the Free State Border. It became impossible for Sir George Colley to sit down quietly and allow the Transvaal forces to surround him and cut off his supplies. Accordingly, in the second week in February, he moved out of camp with a portion of his force for the purpose of opening communication, if possible, with Newcastle, and, through Newcastle, with the rest of Natal. No resistance was encountered till the Ingogo River, then flooded with the usual summer rains, was crossed, not without difficulty. When, however, the British column attempted to move southwards, the Transvaal forces, from the position they had taken up on the rock-strewn summit of Schuins Hoogte, opposed a strenuous resistance. For several hours the conflict raged, the inhabitants of Newcastle listening to the sound of the guns in breathless suspense. If the Transvaal marksmen could only be dislodged from

their cover among those sharply projecting rocks ! To this end the British artillery, gallantly and ably handled, kept up a fire from morn till dusk. It was no light risk that the artillerymen had to face. According to an eye-witness, the guns and the gun-carriages were literally spattered with lead from the burghers' bullets. To undertake to point a gun became almost certain death. And still the Transvaal farmers, securely ensconced in their rocky shelter-places, kept up the cool, accurate, and deliberate fire which their experience in the hunting-field had rendered almost a second nature. The rain-clouds drooped over the mountains ; the noise of the battle was mingled with the fury of the storm ; the waters of the river, now dividing the British troops from their comrades and their camp, rushed down with all the swiftness of a mountain torrent. When darkness fell the firing ceased, the burgher commander making no doubt that, hemmed in by the enemy in front and by the raging river behind, the British force would have no option but to surrender in the morning. This hope, however, was doomed to disappointment. During the night, by dint of great exertions, the guns and the rest of the troops forming the British column were conveyed once more across the Ingogo River, and when day broke they were safe in the shelter of their camp at Mount Prospect.

It would be a mistake to say that these successive reverses to British arms produced a disinclination to prosecute a war for the complete subjugation of the Transvaal. It would be equally a mistake to suppose that the Transvaal burghers were under any misconception as to the dimensions of the successes they had achieved. In spite of assertions that have

been made to the contrary—assertions based on the individual utterance of some irritated burgher, and circulated apparently with the object of keeping up an angry feeling in this country—the defenders of Transvaal independence were under no kind of delusion as to the value of their military achievements. They were quite alive to the potentialities which the British forces, shut up in the Transvaal or paralysed at Mount Prospect, represented. They knew that if Great Britain were resolved on a conquest of their country, forces would be despatched to South Africa which might well effect the object aimed at, even if the conqueror took possession of a territory in which the smoking remains of towns and farmhouses testified to the hatred with which his rule was regarded. They believed, however, in the justice and humanity of the British people. They knew that the refusal to undo the wrong of the annexation was the result of official misrepresentation. They believed that when once it was made clear that the annexation had been carried out and adhered to under a misconception, the power of Great Britain would not be exercised to maintain it. They believed all this, but knew at the same time that they had to show themselves to be in earnest, and as prepared to face all risks sooner than consent to the loss of their independence. On the other side, the public in this country, though by no means disheartened by the initial discomfiture to small military forces, had become convinced beyond all doubt that the annexation of the Transvaal had been a blunder, that it had been carried out against the wishes of the people of the country, and that those people, by reason of their regard for their independence, their patient resort to every kind of peace-

ful means before they took up arms, and their skill, courage, and humanity when engaged at last in actual warfare, were people worthy of the consideration and respect of a liberty-loving nation.

In spite, then, of the reverses sustained by British troops up to the middle of February, the situation was one eminently favourable for negotiation. It is true that reinforcements were being hurried out from England, but this was an inevitable step on the part of a Government desirous of retaining, even for the purposes of a peaceful policy, the confidence of the country. But, on the other hand, much had been done, not only towards realising the full meaning of the position, but also towards suggesting practical mediation. What was more clearly realised than anything else was the South African aspect of the matter. It came to be known that not only in the independent Republics of South Africa, but in the British Colonies, the whole body of the Dutch population, to say the least, was in warm sympathy with the cause of Transvaal independence. To cope with the Transvaal in insurrection was one thing; to cope with the whole Dutch population of South Africa in insurrection was another. These considerations naturally gave additional strength and importance to the efforts that were being made, from more quarters than one, to bring about an amicable settlement. Foremost in making these efforts was Mr. Brand, the President of the Orange Free State, a man universally respected for his uprightness, his culture, and his sterling patriotism. The tact and statesmanship he had shown a few years previously in dealing with a dispute that had risen between the Free State and Great Britain, with regard to the boundary between the Free State and

Griqualand West, enabled the British Government to regard him with the most friendly confidence, while his patriotism as an Africander—to use a term which did not become current till some little time later—rendered him most acceptable to the Transvaal burghers. Encouraged by his intervention, and in the hope that the situation that had arisen might yet be found susceptible of a peaceful issue, a suspension of hostilities was tacitly agreed to on both sides, and for a whole fortnight and more the British troops at Mount Prospect and the Transvaal burghers in their camp behind Laing's Nek, abstained from any kind of offensive demonstration.

There is so much in the character of Sir George Colley that is admirable, and the circumstances surrounding his death were so eminently tragic, that it is only with the utmost reluctance that his responsibility for one of the most untoward events of recent British history can be alluded to. There is, however, no reason to doubt that, urged by a desire to gain the credit of solving the military problem before him, Sir George Colley undertook a rash adventure in the face of an understanding to abstain, for the moment, from any fresh offensive movement. The story, as told by persons who were on the spot, and who were in possession of opportunities of knowing what passed, is clear and circumstantial. Sir George Colley, towards the end of February, received a communication from the Natal capital, and from a quarter disposing him to attach special value to its contents, pointing out that Sir Evelyn Wood was on his way from England to take over the command, and that unless something could be done to improve the military position before Sir Evelyn Wood arrived, he—Sir George Colley—would have to face the fate

of a military man who had failed to perform the duty entrusted to him. The position, in fact, was not very dissimilar from that in which Lord Chelmsford had been placed in view of the expected arrival of Lord Wolseley. Lord Chelmsford, favoured by good fortune, had fought the battle of Ulundi and redeemed his military reputation before Lord Wolseley was actually on the spot. It was open to Sir George Colley to save his reputation in a similar manner. The essential difference between the two situations lay in the fact that whereas Lord Chelmsford, before the battle of Ulundi, was in the possession of all the reinforcements he had asked for, Sir George Colley had at his disposal only the forces with which the campaign had commenced. Had this reflection been present to his mind, he might perhaps have resisted the temptation. The temptation, however, was without doubt great. To turn a check into a success by a brilliant piece of strategy, arduously carried into effect—to accomplish such a deed as this, would be to send his name down into the records of history in company with the names of the conqueror of Quebec and the heroes of the Indian Mutiny. There were risks to be run, no doubt, but to a sensitive and courageous nature the presence of danger only quickens the resolve to act. Filled with the enthusiasm which the prospect of a brilliant military success can kindle, and blind to the results of a possible failure, Sir George Colley determined to make a dash for the summit of Amajuba.

It is not difficult for those who are acquainted with the physical features of the country to understand that the possibility of turning the position of the Transvaal forces, by occupying the summit of

Amajuba, must have frequently presented itself to the mind of the British commander. There was the mountain, with its steep and in many places inaccessible slopes, looking down, day by day, into the camp of the burgher forces, taking note, as it might be said, of their movements and their strength. If that mountain had only eyes ! Or if, still better, it had guns ! If the idea of scaling that height had been discussed by Sir George Colley with his staff, it may be regarded as certain that the idea had been dismissed for very good reasons. One of those reasons would doubtless be the smallness of the force at his disposal, and the danger there might be of an attack being made on the camp at Mount Prospect while half the British force was away up the mountain. Another reason would doubtless be found in the difficulty of dragging artillery up those precipitous slopes. A third objection might very well have suggested itself in the form of a question whether, even if the summit of the mountain were successfully occupied, very much advantage would result from it. It does not by any means of necessity follow that, if you are on a much higher level than your enemy, you have him at your mercy. You may be able to annoy him, it is true, by a plunging artillery fire ; but unless you have the means of getting at him when he is demoralised, you may be only spending your ammunition for nothing. On the other hand, there was this strong argument in favour of the step—that the Transvaal burghers, if they wished to hold their position behind Laing's Nek undisturbed, would have to dispossess the British troops on the summit of Amajuba. In order to do this they would have to become the attacking party. Now the Transvaal

burgher, almost unequalled as he is for holding a defensive position, is not accustomed to the tactics proper to an attack on a fortified post. Hence, if the summit of Amajuba could be occupied, the Transvaal forces might at least be compelled to fight under conditions that would place them at a disadvantage.

It was on the night of Saturday, the 26th of February, 1881, that the expedition which was destined, as it was hoped, to turn the fortunes of the campaign, set out from the camp at Mount Prospect. Owing to causes which seem never to have been adequately explained, the force consisted chiefly of detachments only from the several regiments under Sir George Colley's command. Possibly it was thought desirable to distribute among those regiments the credit for a brilliant piece of work. Even before the foot of the mountain was reached severe difficulties had to be encountered. In South Africa inequalities in the ground which appear very slight at a short distance, or do not even reveal themselves at all, are often found to be formidable enough when actually encountered. When the steep slope of the mountain was reached the task was found to be little less than stupendous. The guns had to be hauled, by main force, from ledge to ledge, and required the whole strength of the expedition to lift them towards the summit. At last, after hours of strenuous labour, the summit, a flat piece of tableland of some four acres in extent, with a slight depression towards the centre and surrounded by a sort of natural rampart of tumbled rocks, was reached. In the clear morning air the camp of the Transvaal burghers, with its orderly arrangement of wagons, could be plainly seen, the rounded ridges

near Laing's Nek, behind which the camp had been sheltered, appearing on a level with the ground beyond them. The given end had been accomplished ; the position of the enemy had been turned ; and cablegrams, hastily despatched, gave leader - writers in London newspaper offices an opportunity for showing their versatility, by converting what had been originally penned as general comment into a pæan of patriotic satisfaction.

The end of the story, however, had yet to come. The British force had not long been in possession of the mountain summit before its presence was perceived from the camp of the Transvaal burghers. The first effect was almost consternation. The idea that so difficult a task as the occupation of Amajuba might be undertaken by the British commander, had not occurred to the Republican leaders. Beyond this, there can be no question—the assertion has been openly made on their side, and has never been contradicted—that they were relying on the tacit suspension of hostilities which had been agreed to for the purpose of promoting the chances of an amicable settlement of the question between the burghers of the Republic and the British Government. The surprise was thus not a little mingled with indignation. But what was more evident than anything else was the necessity for immediate action. Volunteers were called for, for an attack upon the mountain. The position seemed a strong one, but it was known that the force in possession of it could not be very large. The volunteers were immediately forthcoming—a fact which cannot be considered apart from the necessity thus laid upon men, accustomed to defensive tactics, to assume the offensive. What those who thus volunteered thought of their

chances of success, it would be somewhat difficult to ascertain. Speaking from a purely military point of view, it certainly seems astonishing that men advancing in skirmishing order, and without any kind of drill to enable them to strike a collective blow, should venture an attack upon a position of such apparent strength, held by a regular force possessed of artillery. It may be believed, however, that the position was not nearly so strong as it seemed, and that the very steepness of the ground was its actual weakness. The attacking force was thus enabled, moving singly, and every man taking advantage of the cover available, to creep up step by step, never revealing their real strength, till they were actually on the very edge of the tableland forming the summit, and able, from the rocks surrounding the tableland, to pour a destructive fire upon the troops drawn up in the central depression. The fire opened from one point of the circumference of the plateau was echoed by the fire from other points as the members of the attacking party pushed their way to the summit. Sir George Colley fell dead, not regretting, it may be believed, to meet with a soldier's death in the midst of an apparent disaster. The troops, decimated by the accurate fire of the Transvaal burghers, broke, and sought safety by hurling themselves down the precipitous slopes of the mountain. The journalists in the London newspaper offices had once more to rewrite their leading articles, and on Monday morning, the 28th of February, the nation woke up to realise that, besides having to lament the loss of a gallant and chivalrous general and of a large proportion of his command, it was face to face with a situation the intricacy of which was perhaps without a parallel in the history of the British Empire.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANSVAAL SETTLEMENT.

THE untoward tragedy of Amajuba, the most unexpected and most undesirable thing that could have happened, at least had the effect of eclipsing for the moment all other political controversies. Even the sharpness of the conflict between the Gladstone Government and the Irish Nationalists, which had been brought to a crisis a few weeks before by the wholesale removal of Irish members from their places in the House of Commons, was for the moment forgotten. The reverse was so complete, the tragedy was so striking, that the whole nation was absorbed by it, and looked eagerly for some revelation of the intentions of the Government. Mr. Gladstone, diverted from his study of Irish problems, gave the South African situation his earnest attention. His penetrating mind at once perceived the ruling factors of the problem. These may be said to have been three in number. First, there could be no doubt of the reality of the desire of the Transvaal burghers for a restoration of their independence. Next, there could be no doubt of the absence of any desire on the part of the English people to deprive them of that independence by force of arms. In the third place, there could be

no doubt as to the existence of an intention to arrive at a friendly settlement before the disaster of Amajuba took place. At the same time that disaster had very seriously added to the difficulties of the situation. A wound had been inflicted on the national pride, and though reason might plead that there was nothing in the circumstances that should stand in the way of an amicable settlement, the sense of injury and irritation came in to protest against the conclusions to which reason so clearly pointed.

The question to be decided was a difficult one. Should the British Government enter on a war of conquest, at an enormous expense, in an admittedly bad cause, and at the risk of involving the whole of South Africa in the ruin of a civil war? Or should it persevere in its already formed intention to settle the Transvaal difficulty peaceably, ignoring the charges of cowardice and weakness which would certainly be levelled at the Ministry by the military party in the country? No reasonable and impartial person, it may be believed, could long hesitate between these two alternatives. The benefits to be gained by adopting the latter course were real; the benefits to be gained by adopting the former course were imaginary. To satisfy the military party in the country there must be the evidence of a preparedness to employ force, if necessary; to satisfy the preponderating national feeling and to satisfy also the claims of reason, justice, and humanity, there must be no stone left unturned to secure a peaceable settlement. The first step taken was one which was bound to meet with the approval of the military party. Sir Frederick Roberts, then newly arrived in England fresh from the fame of his masterly march from Cabul to Can-

dahar, was despatched to South Africa at short notice to assume the position of commander-in-chief. Three weeks would have to elapse before he set his foot on South African soil, and those three weeks were to be made use of for the purpose of arriving, if possible, at an amicable settlement.

The task was not altogether an easy one, and it was rendered all the more difficult by the fact that the representatives of British authority in Natal were soldiers and not civilians. The post of High Commissioner at Capetown was practically vacant; for though Sir Hercules Robinson had been appointed as Sir Bartle Frere's successor, he was still in England, and there was little disposition to entrust matters of such moment to a mere *locum tenens*. Sir George Colley, the High Commissioner in South-Eastern Africa, was dead. The Administrator of the Transvaal was shut up in Pretoria by a cordon of burgher forces. It devolved, therefore, on Sir Evelyn Wood, who became Administrator of the Government in Natal by virtue of his position as senior military officer in the Colony, to undertake the task of negotiating with the Republican leaders. The duty was about as unpleasant a one as a soldier could have had imposed on him, and it was no less unpleasant to Sir Redvers Buller, in his capacity as chief of the staff. It takes away nothing from the sense of duty which both men took into their work that neither, probably, believed that any arrangement of terms was possible. The nature of the earlier interviews between the representatives of the contending parties did not, if various accounts may be trusted, seem to promise much progress towards the desired end. The two British officers found that in the solid sense and shrewdness of Mr. Kruger,

whose ability was quickly recognised, and in the keen, sarcastic criticism of Dr. Jorissen, who attended the conferences as legal adviser to the Republican triumvirate, they had no ordinary material to deal with, and both would doubtless have consulted their individual feelings best if they could have broken off negotiations and given the burgher forces twenty-four hours to evacuate their camp. The representatives of the burghers, on the other hand, were surprised to find that their independence, if restored, was likely to be made subject to conditions and limitations of a serious and totally unacceptable kind. It seems, indeed, in the highest degree probable that, but for a certain mediatory influence that was introduced, the negotiations would have been of no avail, and the whole issue would have been left in the hands of Sir Frederick Roberts. That mediatory influence was supplied by Mr. Brand, the President of the Orange Free State, who, as an acceptable person to both parties, arrived at Laing's Nek, having been delayed by the weather on his journey from Bloemfontein, in time to prevent the disaster—for a terrible disaster it would have been—of a renewal of hostilities. It was owing to his arguments and reassurances that the representatives of the burghers were convinced of the necessity of preparing themselves to accept, not indeed all they thought they could in justice claim, but as much as Mr. Gladstone's Government, owing to personal and party difficulties, would be able at the moment to give.

Owing to Mr. Brand's effective mediation, the terms of settlement were signed between the representatives of the British Government and the Republican triumvirate on the 24th of March, these terms

to be embodied in a convention to be subsequently ratified by the Transvaal Volksraad. Whether the Transvaal representatives knew it at the time or not, there can be little doubt that they owed the unacceptable nature of the terms to which they were subsequently compelled to agree to the divisions in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, and principally to the influence of the late Mr. W. E. Forster, who was then occupying the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland. Mr. Forster, with all his excellences, was a man of curiously unequal character. An earnest desire to do the best was so strangely mingled with a tendency to believe the worst, that not unfrequently what he imagined he did for the best was the very worst possible that could be done. Possessing as he did, by reason of his successful handling of the educational question, the implicit confidence of the great body of English Nonconformists, he was able to make use of his profound suspicion of all Irish Nationalists to thrust a policy of Irish coercion upon a Cabinet the majority of whom were perfectly convinced of its uselessness and its injustice. By some strange mental twist he had come to believe that you could show the profoundest mistrust of a people in every word and action, and yet get that people to regard you with confidence and gratitude. The Irish Nationalists, possibly because so many of them were Catholics, he profoundly mistrusted. He mistrusted the Dutch race in South Africa just as profoundly, in spite of their being Protestants. By virtue of the position he held as the trusted representative of English Nonconformists, he was able to more than neutralise, in respect both of Ireland and South Africa, the influence of sound Liberal principles. He would not object to a Land Act for Ireland

for the purpose of remedying manifest injustices, but he took care—conscientiously took care—that the Land Act should be robbed of all its virtue by the legalisation of a perpetual suspicion. Similarly, while not objecting to the act of justice by which the Transvaal burghers became once more independent, he conscientiously did his utmost to rob that act of justice of its grace and effectiveness by perpetuating his suspicion of the Dutch race in South Africa. The success he had achieved in carrying out his own ideas by the expulsion of Irish Nationalists from the House of Commons rendered his influence all the greater when, a few weeks subsequently, the question had to be discussed of the terms to be granted to the Transvaal burghers. His influence with the philanthropic party on both sides of the House of Commons added greatly to the influence he already possessed as Chief Secretary for Ireland. There was to be no further prosecution of the war in the Transvaal; on that point Mr. Forster was in agreement with Mr. Gladstone and the Radical wing of the Liberal party. But, as soon as that was settled, the terms of settlement were to be restricted in every possible way, and were especially to be marked with the profound distrust entertained by Mr. Forster and the whole philanthropic party in the House of Commons with regard to the Dutch methods of native policy. That it was Mr. Forster's influence which was at work was made apparent in several ways. It was perhaps specially made apparent in the fact that the Liberal official organ—the *Daily News*—which up to the conclusion of the peace at Laing's Nek had dealt with the Transvaal question on the broadest lines of right and justice, from the moment the peace was con-

cluded accepted the views of the Aborigines Protection Society, in which Mr. Forster was a leading power. It was apparent, too, in the fact that it was not till after Mr. Forster was forced to retire from the Cabinet through the utter failure of his Irish policy that any attempt was made to correct the shortcomings of the original terms of the Transvaal settlement. It was still further apparent in Mr. Forster's action, when the terms of a revised settlement were under discussion two years later, in strenuously endeavouring to prejudice public opinion in England against the Transvaal.

The provisional terms of settlement were agreed upon at Laing's Nek on the 24th of March, 1881. These terms had still to be embodied in a convention, and that convention had still to receive the sanction of the reassembled Volksraad. For the moment, however, the tension of the situation was relieved. Sir Frederick Roberts, arriving at Cape-town, found an intimation awaiting him—no doubt in accordance with his expectations—that a peaceable settlement had, at least for the time being, been arrived at, and that there was no immediate need for his services against the Transvaal burghers. In the meantime Sir Hercules Robinson was prepared to enter on his duties as Governor of the Cape of Good Hope and High Commissioner for South Africa. There is a story, probably well founded, to the effect that when Lord Kimberley, as Colonial Secretary, first named the subject of his appointment to Sir Hercules Robinson, it was in the following words: "We have more than fifty Colonies, and South Africa gives us more trouble than all the rest put together. I want you to go there." This admission of the trouble given by South Africa is surely suggestive of

the question, "Why?"—a question which may possibly find a partial answer in these pages. There can be no doubt, however, that the selection of Sir Hercules Robinson for this admittedly troublesome post was a wise one, and there can be no doubt that this selection has been amply justified by the services he has since rendered. There is one respect in which Sir Hercules Robinson has particularly shown his fitness for this post of difficulty, viz., his capacity for acting upon facts when once he has ascertained them.

This quality was peculiarly valuable in respect of the work first of all entrusted to his hands. In company with Sir Evelyn Wood and Sir J. H. de Villiers, the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, he proceeded, almost immediately on arriving in South Africa, to Pretoria, for the purpose of settling the terms of the convention between the British Government and the Transvaal burghers. The task could under no circumstances have been an easy one, and it was undoubtedly rendered more difficult by the prevailing influence of the philanthropic party in official and parliamentary circles in England. The claims for compensation by British subjects; the conditions of native government; the regulation of the foreign relations of the country—all these formed matter for anxious consideration. As regards the claims for compensation, these for the most part turned out to be ridiculous. A characteristic claim was one put forward for £50,000 by reason of the claimant's feelings having been wounded by the restoration of Transvaal independence. A far more serious matter for the Commission—or rather the majority of the Commission—to handle was the suggestion made by Sir Evelyn Wood, as one of the Commissioners,

to draw the eastern boundary of the Republic along the 30th degree of east longitude, thus cutting off the Transvaal from its contact with the Portuguese boundary, and depriving it of a belt of territory not less than a hundred miles wide. This recommendation, it was known at the time, was based on the belief in the existence of rich gold-deposits in the districts thus to be severed. The recommendation is specially worthy of allusion by reason of the fact that it is still sometimes contended that if the existence of gold in the Transvaal had been suspected in 1881, British rule would never have been withdrawn. If that suggestion had been acted on, it would, even if accepted by the Volksraad, have been the cause of endless irritation and trouble, and would also, as regards the political location of gold-deposits, have been perfectly futile. It would, it is true, have left the De Kaap and Lydenburg gold-fields outside the Republic, but the Rand fields, which were bound to be discovered some day, would still have been well within it. Fortunately Sir Hercules Robinson was more disposed to lean upon the knowledge and experience of Sir J. H. de Villiers than upon the advice prompted by the more military instincts of Sir Evelyn Wood. The suggestion was overruled, and a convention was at last drawn up which represented, it may be believed, the very utmost Mr. Gladstone's Government was prepared to grant, and the very least which the Transvaal burghers, through the Volksraad, could be induced to accept.

Though the negotiations had been brought thus far, it could not be said that the situation was yet clear of danger. The feeling excited in military circles by the circumstances under which peace had been concluded were bitter in the extreme, especially

among the British reinforcements which had not taken part in the earlier actions, but which were inspired by a burning and, from a strictly military point of view, perhaps not unnatural wish to take part in a military revenge. It is only just to say that this feeling was by no means shared by those who had met the Transvaal burghers in action, and who had learnt to appreciate their value as soldiers and their humanity as citizens. A particularly graceful incident of the moment was the presentation to General Piet Joubert by Major Stewart, who acted as Sir George Colley's chief of the staff, of a sword which had been worn by Major Stewart's grandfather while serving under Wellington in the Peninsular War. Gifts of this kind are neither tendered nor accepted save by men who are worthy of each other's respect. The presentation gave rise, a few years later, to a further incident which still more clearly went to show the stuff of which the burgher commandant-general was made of; for when Major Stewart, then known as Sir Herbert Stewart, fell in his gallant attempt to relieve Khar-toum, General Joubert returned the sword to the deceased officer's family, with a graceful and appreciative letter. Incidents of this kind are well worthy to be remembered, as characteristic of the spirit which animated both sides in a conflict which might so easily have been avoided. It must nevertheless be admitted that in a majority of cases the sense of irritation outweighed the power of appreciation, and that anything that might lead to a renewal of hostilities would have been eagerly welcomed, not only in military circles but by a considerable section of the less thoughtful among British colonists in South Africa. Possibly this feeling was to some extent

encouraged by the rumoured disbelief on the part of the highest military authorities in the willingness of the Transvaal Volksraad to ratify the convention concluded at Pretoria. The tendency to this disbelief—a disbelief undoubtedly based upon a wish—became stronger in the later months of the year, after Sir Hercules Robinson had returned to Capetown, and before the Volksraad had arrived at a decision. The air became thick with rumours about what was spoken of as “the obstinacy of the Boers,” and about intended military movements. It was at one time, indeed, circumstantially reported that, in view of the certainty of the Volksraad refusing to ratify the convention, troops were at once to be moved up from the lower districts of Natal to commanding positions near the Transvaal border. Had that happened—had the members of the Volksraad seen reason to believe that military pressure was being brought to bear upon them to induce them to ratify a convention which they were very far from completely approving—it is by no means improbable that the required ratification would have been withheld. Fortunately, as there is reason to believe, the danger was perceived in London, and instructions were sent out to South Africa that no movements of troops were to take place except with the direct sanction of Sir Hercules Robinson in Capetown.

When, in October, 1881, the Volksraad met in Pretoria to consider the convention, very serious exception was at once taken to several of its conditions. The triumvirate, indeed, consisting of Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Piet Joubert, did not submit the convention as one with which they professed to be satisfied. The resolution passed by the Raad on the 25th of October, by which the

required ratification was expressed, set forth in explicit terms the grounds of objection, as well as the wording of the address by which the convention was submitted for the Raad's consideration. "We cannot flatter ourselves," said Mr. Kruger, in his capacity as Vice-President, "with the hope that the convention will satisfy you in its various provisions. It has not satisfied ourselves, but we venture to give you this assurance—that we signed it under the conviction that, under the circumstances, sincere love for our fatherland and solicitude for the welfare of South Africa demanded from us not to withhold our signatures from this convention." Mr. Kruger went on to assure the Raad that every effort had been made to obtain a modification of the conditions which seemed objectionable, and expressed the conviction that the British Government would itself have to propose modifications. The Volksraad, in the resolution accepting and ratifying the convention, echoed the objections of the triumvirate, and placed on record the fact that in assenting to the ratification the members of the Raad were influenced by the same motives as compelled the triumvirate to sign the document. "These motives," said the resolution, "the Raad dares to publish, without any reservation, to the whole world. They may be stated in two words—fear of renewed bloodshedding between races who are called to bear with and esteem each other ; fear of renewed division between the two chief representatives of the white races in South Africa, which undermines the common welfare of all the States and Colonies of South Africa." The reasons for the dissatisfaction felt were stated with perfect straightforwardness. Broadly speaking, it was complained that the conditions of

the convention were not in agreement with the terms of peace signed in the preceding March at Laing's Nek. "In discussing the terms of peace," the resolution declared, "the right of the people to complete independent self-government was acknowledged, while to the sovereign was alone conceded the right to supervise foreign relations." The particular points in respect of which the Raad desired modifications were enumerated in detail as follows :—

- (1) Instead of the direction of foreign relations, supervision thereof ;
- (2) no interference with the legislature of the country ;
- (3) the Resident to be representative of the Sovereign, and nothing more ;
- (4) the territory taken to east and west to be compensated for by England ;
- (5) the debts of the country only to be paid by the burghers if duly and lawfully proved to exist ;
- (6) compensation for damage sustained during the war to be only paid for losses not justified by the necessities of war.

These exceptions are worth noting, because they were in almost every respect exceptions the reasonableness of which was admitted when the revision of the convention was discussed two or three years later. The fact that they were indicated by the Volksraad serves to show the extent to which the original intentions of Mr. Gladstone's Government had been whittled down by the influence of the philanthropic party in the House of Commons, between the signing of the terms of peace at Laing's Nek in March and the signing of the convention in Pretoria in August. The influence of the philanthropic party was as unfortunate as it was utterly unjustifiable. It was unjustifiable because not only was there not one single tittle of evidence to show that the Republican Government had been in the

habit of dealing unjustly with native interests, but, on the contrary, the main official excuse for the annexation was found in the alleged danger to European settlement from a native combination. It is clearly impossible to justify the same act by contradictory excuses. It is conceivable that the Transvaal burghers were in need of assistance to protect them against the surrounding natives; it is also conceivable that the natives were in need of protection against the Transvaal burghers. But you cannot act at different times as if both propositions were true. The influence of the philanthropic party was unfortunate, because it was expressive of the perpetuation of those slanders against the Dutch race in South Africa which have caused so much trouble from the very earliest days of British settlement. The Dutch race in South Africa have good reason to complain that they have been pursued from place to place, and from generation to generation, by slanders based on evidence which has never been sifted, and which they have never been allowed an opportunity of refuting. To mix up these slanders again with an act of justice which had been rendered necessary by the acknowledgment of a colossal blunder was to rob that act of justice of its grace, and to lay the foundation for serious mischief in the future. That the influence of the philanthropic party, with Mr. Forster at its head, produced this result, there can be no doubt whatever. The Volksraad, it may be said, did not accept the position thus marked out for them without serious protest, and without making endeavours to alleviate it. Recognising in Mr. Gladstone the incarnation of that spirit of English justice which had led to the practical reversal of the annexation,

the Volksraad addressed itself to him with the view of obtaining further concessions. Nothing further, however, could be obtained at the moment, beyond an indirect promise that the convention might be revised if it was not found to work satisfactorily. With this promise, and on the strength of advice tendered by friends who understood the difficulties of Mr. Gladstone's Government, the Raad had for the moment to remain content, and, to the immense relief of the great body of South African settlers, though possibly to the disappointment of aspirants for military distinction, the Pretoria Convention was ratified. The withdrawal of Imperial troops from Natal followed, and all parties concerned were at leisure to reckon up the gains or losses resulting from the inception, the trial, and the final collapse of the policy of Imperialism, as applied through the medium of Lord Carnarvon's scheme of confederation to South Africa.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUTCH AWAKENING.

FAILING as it did to accomplish any of the ends which it was designed to accomplish, the scheme of confederation projected by Lord Carnarvon had yet one most important and enduring result. It created and consolidated the Dutch party in South Africa. In 1877, when the annexation of the Transvaal took place, the Dutch population in the British Colonies was utterly unrepresented and ineffective in political life. When the Pretoria Convention was signed in 1881, that population was manifestly the dominant power in the Cape Parliament and throughout South Africa. That South Africa had largely benefited from this awakening of the Dutch population to a sense of its political importance, there can be no doubt. There have been, it is true, some drawbacks, and it is not to be doubted that more lately the political power of the Dutch party in the Cape Colony has been made use of for ends which ten years ago could hardly have been foreseen. But, on the whole, the Dutch awakening has been largely beneficial to South Africa. It has brought into play forces which, being intimately mixed up with the industrial and agricultural progress and prosperity of the country, are far more safely to be relied on, even

in spite of partial aberrations, than forces placed at a distance and only coming in contact with the practical life of South Africa by sudden and capricious starts—the result not unfrequently of some complete misinterpretation of very partial impressions.

Here is the broad fact that has to be made plain, the concentrated result of the events of the ten years that elapsed between 1877 and 1887—that an attempt made from outside to blend South Africa together in the chains of Imperial influences, not only utterly and completely failed, but left the anti-Imperial factor—a factor in no sense necessarily anti-British, either before or after—immensely stronger than it was when the attempt began.

How completely the confederation scheme had failed, how completely unsuited it was to the conditions existing in the South African Continent, was illustrated by a little incident that occurred shortly after the ratification of the Pretoria Convention. The idea seemed to be still lingering somewhere in the Colonial Office that even if it had been impossible to bring about a confederation of the whole of South Africa, it might still be possible to accomplish something in that direction by bringing about a confederation between the two British Colonies. It had already been suggested, in the face of the fact that Natal existed as a separate Colony by virtue of a separate and distinct charter, that the Governor of Natal should only communicate with the Colonial Office through the High Commissioner at Capetown. Such a suggestion was immensely distasteful to the Natal colonists, whose commercial interests were by no means identical with the interests of the Cape Colony, and who not unnaturally dreaded the

influence of a High Commissioner who, in respect of all local matters at least, would be anxious to consult the views of Ministers in Capetown. The idea had been dropped while Sir George Colley occupied the position of Governor of Natal and High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa. With the appointment of Sir Hercules Robinson as Governor and High Commissioner at Capetown, and with the comparative settling down of affairs in the Transvaal, the intention seemed to have been once more formed of making Natal more or less dependent on the views of the High Commissioner and, by consequence, of his Ministers, in Capetown. It became known that a gentleman utterly unknown to the Colonial service—Mr. W. J. Sendall, then occupying a responsible position in the offices of the Local Government Board in London—had been nominated Lieutenant-Governor of Natal. The reduction of Natal, which had advanced considerably under the Governorship of Sir George Colley, to the level of a Lieutenant-Governor's charge, was in itself calculated to cause resentment. The resentment, however, became indignation when it was further known that Mr. Sendall was a nominee of Sir Hercules Robinson. There was no personal objection to Mr. Sendall, who has in more recent years held, with much credit, important Colonial appointments. The appointment was strongly censured and opposed because it plainly pointed at the subjection of the interests of Natal to the interests of the Cape Colony, with the view of carrying into effect some maimed and limited scheme of confederation. It is, perhaps, to be admitted that the protests that came from the Colony would not have been effective had it not been for the very

practical offer made by the Colonial Legislature to increase the salary payable to the representative of the Crown from £2,500 to £4,000 per annum, the offer being accompanied by a resolution limiting supply to the first four months of the ensuing financial year. The offer was effective in securing what was required—the appointment of a Governor under conditions that served as a guarantee for the recognition of the independent constitutional rights of Natal. The recognition of these rights has been by no means unimportant in respect of its bearing on the subsequent political and commercial relations between the South African States and Colonies, as may perhaps presently be seen. For the moment, this resistance offered by Natal to a proposal which would have resulted in a partial confederation by a sidewind, finally disposed of the remains of Lord Carnarvon's scheme, and left the South Africa Act of 1877, the action of which had been limited to five years, to expire in 1882 without so much as a regret being expressed over its grave.¹

The confederation scheme, with all its sad catalogue of disasters, was absolutely dead, and in the place of the influence of an Imperial policy South Africa found itself under the domination of those long-silent Dutch settlers whose national feelings had been so deeply touched by the manifest

¹ It may perhaps be worth mentioning that the device of getting rid of an unwelcome appointment by offering an increased salary originated with the late Sir Robert Fowler, M.P., who happened to be visiting Natal when the matter was under discussion. Addressing a journalist sitting next him at dinner at Government House, Sir Robert Fowler said: "You can't expect to get a good man when you pay so small a salary." The hint was taken, and notice of a resolution in favour of an increase of the salary was given in the Legislature, which happened to be then in session, next day.

injustices committed against their kinsfolk beyond the Vaal River. It is important, in view of events that happened later, to understand the true sources of the movement through which the Dutch populations of South Africa realised the possibility of working together for national ends. The movement had really a dual origin. The name of Mr. Hofmeyr has been for several years past associated with the name of the Afrikaner Bond. Mr. Hofmeyr, however, was not the founder of the Afrikaner Bond, nor has the idea with which it was first of all founded received any warm encouragement from him, more especially during the last five or six years. The Bond really had its origin in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, and sprang from a conviction as to the necessity for encouraging the development of the idea of a South African nationality. The bond of sympathy between the Free State and the Transvaal, when the latter was struggling for the recovery of its independence, was naturally of a kind which passed far beyond the passive stage. If the Transvaal failed to retain its independence, the independence of the Free State would be most seriously jeopardized. It was the Republican principle that was at stake—the right of the Republics to maintain that liberty for absolute self-government which they had so long enjoyed. That the Free State burghers materially assisted their brethren in the Transvaal there is no doubt whatever, the assistance taking the shape of men, horses, and arms. It is no secret that similar assistance, though of a less marked kind, was furnished by the Dutch farmers living in Natal. In the Cape Colony, too, the sympathy of the Dutch population, especially that portion of it which was to be found in the

eastern districts of the Colony, was prepared to be just as active, had the occasion arisen. Among the Dutch farmers of the Western Province of the Colony, where the wine-industry is carried on, the sympathy was strong, but disposed rather to confine itself to words than to resort to acts. That might perhaps be owing, among other causes, to the further removal of the Western Province farmers from the actual scene of the conflict. The different conditions existing in the different communities naturally determined the shape assumed by movements which in a large degree resulted from one and the same cause. There had been already existing in the Cape Colony, prior to the occurrence of the Transvaal struggle for independence, an association of which Mr. Hofmeyr was the founder and the Parliamentary mouthpiece, known as the Farmers' Protection Association. Concerning itself chiefly, if not entirely, with local political questions, its object was to secure protection and encouragement for agricultural industries. Up to the founding of this Association the idea of a protective policy had never found its way into Cape Colony politics. Although in some respects the scale of Customs duties was high—very considerably higher, indeed, than that existing in Natal—these duties were levied for revenueal purposes only, and any protective effect they might have was purely accidental. This was quite in keeping with the policy which had been dominant in the Cape Colony since the discovery of the Kimberley diamond mines. The object of successive Colonial Ministries was to reap as large a benefit as possible for the Colony from the new trade created by the diamond industry, while steering clear of the danger of diverting that trade to

Natal by the adoption of too high a tariff. Under such a policy as this, agricultural interests in the Colony were only too likely to be neglected. Hence the idea had occurred to Mr. Hofmeyr to form a new political party based on agricultural interests, which might be able to correct to some extent the almost exclusive favour shown by Ministries and Parliaments to commercial interests.

This agricultural party was in the earlier stages of its career when the Transvaal war broke out. Naturally its members, being themselves almost entirely of Dutch origin, were largely in sympathy with the protesting Transvaal burghers, though not so actively in sympathy with them as were the burghers of the Free State. In the Free State the national aspect of the situation was more forcibly recognised, and to leading minds in that State the moment seemed to have come for the organisation of some national bulwark—national in a South African sense—against such wild acts of Imperial interference as had resulted in the Transvaal annexation, with its train of disastrous consequences. It was in the capital of the Free State, therefore, that the Afrikander Bond was started with the idea of furthering the above object. Principal among its founders were Mr. Frederic William Reitz, then Chief Justice of the Free State, and subsequently its President; Mr. Ewald Esselen, then a rising young advocate; and Mr. Borckenhagen, proprietor and editor of the *Free State Express*. Mr. Reitz, who had been called to the bar in England and had practised as an advocate in Capetown, may be regarded, in common with his presidential predecessor, Mr. Brand, and the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, Sir J. H. de

Villiers, as representing the highest rank of intelligence, culture, and patriotism in South Africa, and it must ever be a matter for regret that his term of office as President was cut short by ill-health. Mr. Esselen, whose brother for some years represented the Transvaal Government in Swazieland, is a man of undoubted talent, and was closely identified with the Transvaal Government in the period immediately after the restoration of independence, having acted as secretary to the deputation that visited England in 1884 at the time of the revision of the Pretoria Convention. Mr. Borckenhagen, a German by birth, is a man of no ordinary intelligence and culture, and as a forcible writer on political subjects has probably no equal in South Africa. It is well, perhaps, to trace to its correct sources a movement which has come to occupy so large a place as a factor in South African politics ; and it may also be well to emphasise the fact that, although doubtless anti-Imperial, in being opposed to all attempts to govern South Africa from outside and in opposition to the wishes of its European population, the Afrikander Bond never was, and never was intended to be, anti-British, even though one of its original founders was a German by birth and the other two Germans by extraction. In the adoption of the expression " Afrikander " a somewhat bold departure was made, for the term had up to then been usually applied to the coloured population of South Africa. The word, however, as adopted into the title of the new organisation, was felt to have a distinct and valuable significance. It was meant to signify, and it has come to signify, all those Europeans, no matter what their original nationality or birthplace, who regard South Africa as their home, and who

are therefore, as it may be presumed, resolved that South African interests shall be under their own control, and free from all interference or intervention from outside. The evils that had lately disturbed the country, it was plainly seen, had come from the neglect, in the interests of an outside policy, of the wishes of the South African population, and it was hoped that by the formation of an Afrikaner Bond a recurrence of such evils might be prevented.

The creation of the Afrikaner Bond, expressing as it did the birth of a national sentiment in South Africa, came about very opportunely for the leaders of the Farmers' Protection Association in the Cape Colony. It was at once seen by Mr. Hofmeyr that the political party which he was building up would be rendered far more influential if it could identify itself with the national sentiment of Afrikanerism, whose flag had been hoisted at Bloemfontein. Thus, without much difficulty, the Farmers' Protection Association in the Cape Colony became the Afrikaner Bond. In reality, it was mainly a Farmers' Protection Association still, but, by assuming to be a good deal more, by appropriating the importance and dignity that belonged to a national movement, it vastly increased its power and its authority. It was inevitable that in its earlier days it should be misunderstood. All such institutions are misunderstood in their earlier days. It was denounced as anti-British, and Mr. Hofmeyr, whose name then came chiefly before the public in connection with it, was declared by excited British journalists to be little less than a traitor. This, however, in no way prevented the Bond from doing good work, quite apart from all political questions. Until it came into

existence the Dutch language had been completely ignored by the Cape Government, although Dutch was habitually spoken by a considerable majority of the European population of the Cape Colony. The English language was alone used in Parliament and in official documents, while even at the telegraph offices only English telegrams would be accepted.

The Bond was not long in claiming equal treatment for the English and Dutch languages, and succeeded in making its claim good, to the considerable disgust of old-fashioned officials. These reforms, perfectly right and reasonable in themselves, were for some time regarded with apprehension by the more British portion of the community. It was suspected that these steps were intended to lead up to a demand for the complete withdrawal of the British flag from South Africa. Really, Mr. Hofmeyr, who came to be regarded as the incarnation of the separatist idea, had never for a single instant, or in the smallest degree, contemplated any such withdrawal. The encouragement of the idea of South African nationality gave greater cohesion to the Bond party, as it came to be called, in the Cape Parliament; and that increased cohesion, in its turn, gave it the power, under Mr. Hofmeyr's leadership, to extract material benefits from the Colonial Parliament. When Mr. Hofmeyr visited England at the time of the Queen's Jubilee, in 1887, he caused surprise to not a few by appearing in the guise of one anxious to promote a scheme of Imperial federation. The conversion seemed no less remarkable than that of Saul the persecutor to Paul the preacher. The truth is, however, that there has never been any conversion. Mr. Hofmeyr became an advocate of Imperial federation for the sake of

the solid advantages that might be thereby gained for his friends and followers in the Cape Parliament. If Imperial federation could be brought about, his friends, the wine-growers of the Western Province of the Cape Colony, would reap the benefit resulting from the right to send their wines to England under a lower rate of duty than was imposed on wines grown in foreign States. That was a solid advantage—such an advantage as Mr. Hofmeyr's parliamentary supporters understood, just as they understood the advantages to be gained from the Cape Parliament in the shape of untaxed brandy, protective duties on meat and grain, and more stringent laws for the control of native servants. As long as an appearance of holding to that idea of South African nationality, which was present with the original founders of the Bond, would serve the purpose of the Bond party in the Cape Parliament, that national idea would be adhered to. The event showed that as soon as it became convenient to get rid of the national idea, it would be got rid of without much hesitation or scruple.

Meantime, however, in spite of radical differences of purpose which could only be made manifest in course of time, the Dutch awakening in South Africa was most real and effective. It came almost as a revelation to a population who had been accustomed to regard all the doings of officials or legislative bodies in Capetown with contempt and indifference to find that they were able, by means of political organisation and in a perfectly constitutional manner, to influence and control the policy and legislation of the country. Once practically assured of this power, they were not slow to manifest a desire to use it, and to use it, moreover, without undertaking any of

the responsibilities which are usually attached to the possession of political power. As one of the results of the successful struggle for independence in the Transvaal, the Sprigg Ministry, discredited by its failure to further the cause of confederation and by its disastrous handling of the question of native disarmament, had resigned office in the early part of 1881, to be succeeded by a Ministry which was the first to act on the theory that the Bond, though none of its leaders would accept office, was the power that had to be obeyed. It can hardly be said that this is a safe or sound interpretation of the principles of constitutional government, and there can be no doubt that the acceptance of the maxim that power may be wielded without responsibility has led to serious evils.

And here the remark may be ventured that constitutional government, as existing in British Colonies in South Africa, and probably in British Colonies elsewhere, is a clumsy and unpractical device, which has the effect of encouraging abuses and preventing sound administration. The British constitution, in spite of the transparent fictions upon which it rests and in spite of the series of accidents which has made it what it is, has at least some dignity and flavour of age about it. To attempt to frame a constitution for a Colony, a young community, on the model of the fictions and accidents represented by the British constitution, is hardly less absurd than it would be to attempt to build a railway station in Australia on the model of Westminster Abbey. All the social and other forces that make the British constitution dignified in spite of its abounding anomalies are absent from a Colony. The high and disinterested tone of public life is

not to be had. The incomes attaching to the leading political offices, small though they are as compared with the incomes attaching to similar offices in England, possess an attractiveness for needy men which is, to say the least, demoralising. The temptations to jobbery become much more powerful, the opportunities become much more frequent. A tendency to disbelieve in the existence of honest and independent opinion is inevitably encouraged, while administrative experience is diminished. As a matter of fact—and this conviction is the result of a considerable experience—the form of constitution that obtains in the two Republics of South Africa, leaving out of sight the partial changes resulting from the establishment of a Second Volksraad at Pretoria, seems far better suited to the conditions of young and growing States than the feeble reproductions of the Imperial Parliament which are to be found in so many British Colonies. Under the constitution of the Orange Free State—to take that as an example—no paid head of a department can sit and vote in the Volksraad. Any head of a department has a right to speak in the Volksraad, to explain the working of his department or to support a measure which the Executive is desirous of introducing, but the voting is solely in the hands of the unofficial representatives of the people. The heads of departments are thus men of administrative experience, responsible to the Volksraad, carrying out its decisions and liable to be dismissed from office if their action is not satisfactory, but they are under no temptation to trim their political sails out of regard for the continuance of their own salaries. A constitution of this kind is far more simple than those which it has been thought proper to inflict

upon so many British Colonies, and is far less open to corrupting influences and to the scandal resulting from the imputation of interested motives. The safeguard against hasty constitutional changes, so far as the Orange Free State is concerned, is simple and effective, no proposal for constitutional change being possible until it has been approved of in two successive ordinary sessions of the Volksraad by a two-thirds majority. It seems possible, even in respect of constitutional matters, to learn something from the pioneers of South Africa.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONFUSION AND DEPRESSION.

IT was hardly possible that the agitations stirred up by such events as the Zulu and the Transvaal wars would all at once subside and leave the surface of South African affairs unruffled. Both in the Transvaal and in Zululand, owing to partial attempts to patch up the disturbances resulting from direct Imperial action, conditions had been left highly capable of leading to serious irritation, while the failure of the Cape Government to carry through their policy of disarmament against the Basutos had created a chronic danger which could not be ignored. It is a startling reflection, but a reflection that cannot be avoided, that, in spite of the expenditure of at least five millions sterling by the Imperial Government and of four millions by the Government of the Cape of Good Hope, the objects which the adoption of a "vigorous" policy was to promote were further off than ever, while the dangers which such a policy was supposed to avert were, if anything, more real. The dream of confederation, of a South Africa bound together by Imperial influences and subject to Imperial control, had absolutely vanished, and in its place had been established an anti-Imperial factor which five years before would

have been looked for in vain. As regards the danger of a native combination against Europeans, which had been officially used as an argument in favour of the Transvaal annexation and the Zulu war, that danger had, prior to the annexation of the Transvaal, never existed. It had, however, to some extent been brought into existence by the events of the three or four years immediately succeeding the annexation—events which had come about through the following of the policy of which the Transvaal annexation was a part. The defeat suffered by the Cape forces in their campaign against the Basutos had created a positive danger which previously had no existence. It had taught the Basutos, and through the Basutos other native races in South Africa, these two lessons—that European Governments could be unjust and that they could be successfully resisted. There can be no question that these lessons had their practical effect in native districts in the peace of which the Cape Government was deeply, if not directly, interested. The murder of a magistrate by a chief in the Transkei territories—the native territories, that is to say, east of the frontier of the Cape Colony proper—had to go unpunished and has remained unpunished to this day. The natives, it is true, both in these districts and in Basutoland, were content with having successfully resisted European authority, and made no effort to trespass beyond the borders of their own territories. But there can be no question that whereas, prior to the adoption of a “vigorous” policy, there had been no real danger of a native combination, the danger had to a certain extent been created by the ill-considered steps taken with the view of counteracting it.

The new Cape Ministry, heavily encumbered with the war debt contracted by its predecessors in office, had to sit still and leave the Basutos and other native tribes alone, inwardly thankful that the Basutos were good enough to allow them to adopt this attitude. In Zululand, meantime, matters were in anything but a settled condition. The removal of Cetywayo, whose authority had at least served to keep his own people in order, had left a vacuum which there had been no attempt made to fill. Public feeling in England, dismayed and disgusted at the unexpected disturbances in South Africa, was not prepared to sanction or tolerate any annexation of Zulu territory. A little clearer understanding of the real facts of the situation would have served to show those who held this view that, once Cetywayo was removed, the bringing of Zululand directly under civilised rule would have been in many respects an act both of justice and humanity. Reference to a central authority was an absolutely essential condition of any successful settlement of Zululand. The chiefs who had been left in control of the several districts into which the country had been mapped out were animated in many cases with no great goodwill towards each other, and could not be depended on to keep the peace. Had Cetywayo, after his submission, been restored to his position of central control, under the supervision of British authority, in all probability that would have been the best that could be done. Cetywayo's character, however, had been officially painted in such dark colours that the step was probably thought too venturesome. Deprived of the central control to which they had been accustomed, the Zulu chiefs were able to indulge their feelings of jealousy

against each other. Quarrels and disputes arose in all directions; blood was shed freely; and it seemed not unlikely that the fate of the Kilkenny cats, whether officially prophesied or not, would be the fate of one of the finest and most tractable native races in the South African Continent.

Things were not all this time going smoothly in the Transvaal. Whether of set purpose or not—whether in response to the pressure of the powerful influences in the Cabinet to which allusion has already been made, or whether with the view of proving the Pretoria Convention to be unworkable—the attitude of the Colonial Office towards the restored Republican Government was distinctly harsh and antagonistic. Nothing was too small on which to found a despatch taking the Pretoria Government to task. The reservations implied in the retention of a suzerainty were consistently interpreted in the most unfriendly manner. The existence of the suzerainty was evidently regarded in Downing Street as conferring rights to be pressed to the utmost, but imposing no duties. So strictly were the conditions bearing on the foreign relations of the Transvaal construed that the Pretoria Government was forbidden to hold communication with the Portuguese authorities at Delagoa Bay except by the roundabout route through London and Lisbon. The use by the Pretoria Government of the old name of the South African Republic was severely reproved as in conflict with the Pretoria Convention, which was held, though, as afterwards turned out, wrongly held, to have imposed the employment of the new name of Transvaal State. The Pretoria Government, meantime, had to face continual efforts, set on foot by Europeans living in the country, to

stir up native animosities against itself—efforts with which British residents in the Cape Colony and Natal were in some cases shortsighted enough to sympathise.

Besides all these elements of anxiety and confusion, the whole country was suffering from the depression that inevitably follows on any period of commercial inflation. The events of the Zulu war and the Transvaal war, accompanied as they were by the influx of a large amount of money into the country, had had the effect of producing a commercial activity which was in a very large degree fictitious. The prosecution of the diamond industry at Kimberley had had a similar result, the volume of trade being further swelled by the money expended, both in the Cape Colony and Natal, on railway construction. The trade created by military operations had ceased; railway building had for the time being come to an end; the diamond industry at Kimberley, owing to the serious difficulties encountered as the mines were worked lower, was drooping. A great deal, it is true, had been recently done in the way of floating diamond-mining companies, and a "boom" had been created by which a limited number of speculative individuals had become wealthy. The heyday of the industry, however, had gone by. Men no longer flocked there as they had done at first to throw their muscles and sinews into the work which might enrich them, and which, even if it failed to do so, could hardly leave them worse off than they were before. Kimberley was still a great consuming centre, and it still seemed to Cape Ministries to be their duty to pledge the credit of the Colony up to the hilt for the purpose of pushing on a triple system of railways to that one point.

But the life, the spring, had gone out of it. Meantime the indebtedness of the two Colonies, the drain that had to be made on their resources for the purpose of meeting the interest due to holders of their securities, was yearly becoming greater, while the receipts from railway traffic, which were regarded as the natural set-off to the interest payable on loans contracted for purposes of railway construction, were tending to diminish. Nor did there seem to be, at the moment, anything lying in the immediate future that would serve as a fresh spur to commerce. The goldfields of the Transvaal, about which so much had been whispered when the annexation took place, failed to reveal themselves. Stories of the discovery of new reefs along the eastern frontier of the Republic were afloat, but these new reefs seemed to have a habit of disappointing every one except the vendors of the properties where they were to be found. So far, indeed, from new reefs being worked, the old goldfields at Pilgrim's Rest, in the extreme north-eastern corner of the Transvaal, had been all but abandoned.

This period of depression, however, unacceptable though it was at the time to those who experienced it, had its hidden advantages. It encouraged among the people of South Africa a spirit of economy; it set them to work to examine into the natural resources of the country; and, above all, it began to accustom them to that idea of South African nationality which the original founders of the Afrikaner Bond had sought to emphasise. The Afrikaner Bond party, visibly existing in the Cape Parliament, ceased to be the object of abuse by the more British section of the community. The services rendered by representatives of the Bond party

in criticising public expenditure were seen to be of considerable value, while it began to be admitted that the country could not live on diamonds alone, and that its capacity for producing other articles of export deserved to be better studied. The question of the creation of some closer tie between the different South African communities—a tie that might in the first instance take the experimental form of a common policy in respect of fiscal and railway matters—attracted discussion, and indeed was made the subject of a conference between delegates from two of the South African States, the Free State and Natal. Not much, it is true, resulted from that conference, beyond the laying down of certain general propositions as to the nature of the relations that ought to subsist, so far as fiscal matters are concerned, between a maritime and an inland State. But it was undoubtedly a move in the right direction, and it is only right to give the Legislature of Natal, in which the proposal originated, the credit for having thus realised the needs of the time. It is greatly to be regretted, and to be regretted more and more, that the Cape Colony, possessed as it was and is of an independent constitution, and holding the senior position among the various South African communities, has seldom been able to take any wide and statesmanlike view of South African possibilities, contenting itself rather with playing a game for its own hand and for its own benefit. That is, however, exactly where the limitations of the Bond party in the Cape Parliament—the party that really has hitherto, since it came into existence, governed the policy of successive Cape Ministries—are to be felt. That they are capable of being felt very seriously will perhaps be seen.

It was perhaps only to be expected that the unsatisfactory nature of the situation in the Transvaal and in Zululand would lead to some effort being made to bring about an amelioration. Unless reproof was to be followed up by some marked action, it was impossible for the Colonial Office to be continually scolding the Pretoria Government for alleged disregard of a convention which that Government had from the first declared to be unworkable, nor was it possible to allow Zulu chiefs to go on making raids upon each other to the danger of the general peace of that corner of South Africa. So far as the relations between the Transvaal and the British Government were concerned, Mr. W. E. Forster had been the disturbing influence, and his retirement from the Cabinet, on the failure of his Irish policy, provided an opportunity for considering that revision of the Pretoria Convention which had been conditionally promised at the time it was ratified. Before, however, this proposal for revision could be acted on, the pressure of public opinion in England had produced an official conviction in favour of an alteration of the arrangements in Zululand. The accounts of the disorder there had become so serious that it was plain that something must be done. It is not impossible that in some respects those accounts were exaggerated. There were, apart from official despatches, two channels through which information with regard to Zululand chiefly reached England. One of these channels was represented by letters from the Bishop of Natal to members of the philanthropic party in the House of Commons. The other was represented by telegrams to the *Times* from its correspondent in Durban, a well-known member of the

Natal Legislature. Both sides were anxious to put an end to the existing order of things, but for entirely different reasons. A large party among the colonists wanted to see Zululand absolutely annexed. Those who followed the Bishop of Natal wished to see Cetywayo restored, not, however, without adequate guarantees for his loyal behaviour. Thus it was that both were desirous, if not to exaggerate the evils of the situation in Zululand, at any rate to take care that no fact was suppressed that could tend to discredit the existing settlement. The official view being in favour of keeping things as they were, official efforts were rather directed towards minimising the dangers of the situation. Between the two sets of alarmists, however, and owing to the parliamentary pressure exercised by the philanthropic party, the official view was set aside, and a determination arrived at to restore Cetywayo under such conditions and limitations as recommended themselves to responsible officials in Natal.

It is not worth while to revive, after a lapse of more than a dozen years, the details of a controversy that at the time was carried to an unusual pitch of bitterness. It may, however, be said that there was nothing enthusiastically unpractical in the proposal to replace Cetywayo in Zululand, just as there would have been nothing enthusiastically unpractical in the proposal to leave him there, in the position of a tributary chief, after the final defeat of the Zulu army at Ulundi. On the contrary, the unpractical side in the controversy was that taken by those who, actuated by mere nervous alarm, regarded the complete subjection of Zululand to direct British rule as containing the sole security for peace and order in that

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country. There is no need, in arguing this question, to go into the rights of the Zulu question as it originally presented itself to the mind of Sir Bartle Frere. It may, for the sake of argument, be granted that the ultimatum that resulted in the Zulu war was justified and that the Zulu power was in need of being curbed. Grant this, and then ask what the people who have ever shown themselves the most practical in dealing with native races—the Dutch—would have done under similar circumstances. Undoubtedly they would have made use of the power and authority of the native chief, and would have held him responsible for the maintenance of order. This was the course they followed when, after the total defeat of the Zulus under Dingaan, they installed Panda as chief in his place, with the result that for thirty-five years the peace of South-Eastern Africa, so far as regards any conflict between Europeans and Zulus, remained unbroken. The Dutch settlers, it must be remembered, had no other power than their own to rely on. They had, however, always found that sufficient, even in the sharpest emergency, and coupled with this reliance on their own resources they were free to pursue an intelligible and consistent policy. This last-named condition was an immense advantage, and it might perhaps be not unfair to admit that the dread, based on experience, of the effect of the capricious action of Imperial authorities in London justified to some extent those who urged a final and complete settlement of Zululand by means of actual annexation.

The pressure of the conflict of opinion and of interest resulted, as was perhaps not unnatural, in about the worst possible thing being done that could be done. The attempt to satisfy several conflicting interests

resulted in the satisfying of none. The philanthropic party in England was to be satisfied with the restoration of Cetywayo. The fears of Natal colonists were to be satisfied by the maintenance of a strip of neutral territory between the Natal frontier and the rest of Zululand. The officials in Natal, who were strongly opposed to the restoration of Cetywayo on any terms, were to be satisfied by being left free to arrange the details of the policy approved by the Colonial Office. It seems, even at this day, difficult to understand why Sir Henry Bulwer, who had been reappointed to the Governorship of Natal on the cancellation of the appointment of Mr. Sendall, did not decline to become a party in any way to a policy to which it was known he was strongly opposed. Rightly or wrongly, he had always approved the division of the country planned by Lord Wolseley, and was equally opposed either to its annexation or to the reinstatement of its original chief. It would have been in his power, one would have thought, to express his disapproval by declining to be responsible for the carrying out of the proposed restoration. Had he done so, there can be no doubt he would have had the majority of Natal colonists on his side, and would have compelled the authorities at the Colonial Office to listen to his objections. As things were, it was hardly to be expected that he would feel any sincere interest in the carrying out of a policy which he entirely disapproved. The result was that the arrangement of the details was left in the hands of officials who, for reasons which it is now not worth while to go into, were almost bound to hope and expect that the restoration would turn out to be a failure. Under such conditions its failure could cause no surprise. Having regard to

all the previous and surrounding circumstances, and having regard especially to the apprehensions entertained by the European population of Natal, the restoration was an experiment, and an experiment which, if it was to be successful, needed the most delicate and judicious handling. It did not, perhaps could not, receive such handling, and it failed as completely as its most prejudiced opponents could have wished. It soon became known to chiefs who were interested in maintaining the influence they had exercised during Cetywayo's absence that he would be held responsible for any disturbance that arose, no matter how caused. That was enough. In little more than six months after the date of his restoration he was again a fugitive. A little later he surrendered once more to British authority, and it was not long before he died in captivity, utterly broken-hearted and the victim, there can be little doubt, of a loyal desire to fulfil the pledges he had given to the Imperial Government under conditions which had been made impossible.

One inevitable and foreseen result of these unfortunate events was, without question, the undermining of the reputation of the British Government in the eyes of the native races of South Africa and the corresponding exaltation of the Dutch. That result was very clearly made visible when, shortly after the death of Cetywayo, the main body of the Zulus appealed to the Transvaal farmers for assistance in putting an end to the bloodshed and disorder by which Zululand was being ruined and depopulated. The assistance was granted, not perhaps altogether in a disinterested spirit, and was for the time being effective. The Zulus, however, did not ultimately profit very much by their resort to aid from the

Transvaal. They had to look on while the farmers who had assisted them in return for land-grants consolidated those land-grants into an independent Republic, and they were further compelled to look on while the British Government first of all recognised the existence of the Republic, and subsequently assented to its inclusion in the territory of the Transvaal. It is curiously illustrative of the inconsistencies of South African policy that at the very time when the Zulus were feeling the weight of Imperial displeasure, the Basutos, who had successfully resisted the Cape Government in its attempts to disarm them, were experiencing the light of Imperial favour. The Cape Ministry, failing to see its way towards restoring over the Basutos its discredited authority, entered into negotiations with the Imperial Government with the view of inducing it to assume direct control over Basutoland. The negotiations were successful, owing, there is some reason to believe, to the influence exercised by officials in Natal who were just then anxious to avoid criticism of their policy in Zululand. "Help us to get rid of the Basutos," members of the Cape Ministry seem to have said to Natal officials, "and we will back you up in your wish not to be interfered with in Zululand." The interests of important native tribes thus became counters in a game played between officials animated by no other object than the securing of their own personal comfort. The people who really benefited in any solid respect were the Transvaal burghers, who were enabled to carve out from Zululand a considerable addition to the territories of the South African Republic.

A brighter incident that belongs to this period was the abolition of the Pretoria Convention, and its re-

placement by a new convention, signed in London, in which all the points to which exception was taken by the Transvaal Volksraad in 1881 were conceded. That this revision of the Pretoria Convention was rendered possible by the withdrawal of Mr. W. E. Forster from Mr. Gladstone's Ministry there seems considerable reason to believe. It was further associated with the migration of Lord Kimberley from the Colonial to the India Office, and by the acceptance of the control of Colonial affairs by Lord Derby, who had gradually floated over to the ranks of the Liberal party. Lord Derby could never be accused of much sympathy with native races in South Africa, and he has been credited with a somewhat defective knowledge of modern geography. He was, however, possessed of a clear and cool common sense which recognised the shortcomings in the Pretoria Convention, and was possessed also of a diplomatic training that showed him the un wisdom of making treaties, which ought to be instruments of conciliation, the instruments of irritation. Mr. Kruger a third time visited England, the events that had occurred since his last visit, in 1878, having had the effect of very much increasing his importance in the eyes of Europe. The concessions for which the Volksraad had contended in 1881 were all granted, and a new convention was concluded in which the interest of the British Government in the affairs of the Transvaal was limited to a right to disapprove, within a certain specified time and on certain specified grounds, of any foreign treaties into which the Republic might enter. It is worth while recording that this new convention was agreed upon in spite of the endeavours made by the leading members of the philanthropic party in the House of

Commons, with Mr. W. E. Forster at their head, to inflame public opinion against Mr. Kruger and his Government. The justification for this attempt, which was renewed a little later in connection with affairs in Bechuanaland, has hitherto eluded the search of those who are convinced that there is a cause for everything, but who are unwilling to believe that a statesman who had at one time and another done such admirable work was actuated by a desire to embarrass colleagues who had, after a considerable trial of their patience, disapproved of his Irish policy.

CHAPTER IX.

A CRITICAL JUNCTURE.

IT was perhaps too much to expect that the progress made by the Dutch party in the Cape Colony, and the extensive recognition of the importance of the Dutch factor in South Africa, would provoke no kind of reactionary movement. The new developments that were in progress seemed certainly to suggest the disappearance from South Africa of the direct influence of the Imperial Government; according to some it threatened the displacing of the British flag. That this latter fear was unfounded is now well known. Even the extreme members of the Bond party in the Cape Colony had no thought of the establishment of a Republican form of constitution. They were rather, under the guidance of Mr. Hofmeyr, beginning to look forward to the possibility of reaping the commercial benefits of some kind of Imperial federation. Still, a species of alarm sprang up among the more timid of the British section of the population of the Cape Colony, and the alarm gradually fanned itself into an agitation which, though really weak and insignificant, succeeded in making noise enough to mislead, for a time, even so cautious and level-headed a man as Sir Hercules Robinson.

The chief figure in this agitation was Mr. J. W. Leonard, a member of the Cape Bar who had held, for a brief period, the office of Attorney-General in two successive Administrations. Mr. Leonard, whose name has been prominently before the public in connection with more recent events, was a man in whom most remarkable intellectual gifts were combined with a certain instability of character. An eloquent speaker, and singularly well informed in respect of all matters pertaining to general literature, he has failed to inspire in South Africa the respect that follows a practical and reliable public man. Nevertheless Mr. Leonard succeeded for a brief period in making himself a figure of importance in connection with Cape Colony politics. Under his auspices an association was started with the high-sounding name of the "Empire League," the professed object of which was to stem the advancing tide of Dutch ascendancy and to bring direct Imperial intervention once more upon the South African stage. Meetings, organised by the League, were held in various small towns in the Cape Colony, and resolutions passed in sympathy with the objects which the League professed to be desirous of promoting. Owing to the peculiar conditions of political life in South Africa these meetings and resolutions attracted considerable attention. The small section of the population that sympathised with them had extensive means, of which they took advantage, of making their views felt through the Press. The much larger section of the population that condemned the action of the League remained silent, or, if they expressed their views at all, expressed them through small local Dutch newspapers which were seldom read outside the limits of the district in

which they were printed. Hence, as happened with regard to the annexation of the Transvaal, the situation came to be completely misrepresented. It was believed—and there can be no doubt that Sir Hercules Robinson himself fell a victim to the belief—that there was a real and solid reaction in progress, that the main body of Cape colonists had revised the opinions they had held in 1881, and that a movement to reassert Imperial authority in South Africa in general, and in the Transvaal in particular, would be popular in the Cape Colony, as the most important of South African communities.

Events which were passing elsewhere helped to give acceptability to this view. Ever since the conclusion of the Pretoria Convention in 1881, uncertainty had prevailed as to the exact location of the western frontier of the South African Republic. The uncertainty arose through the claims of native chiefs to lands lying along the border. As it happened, the boundary laid down by the Pretoria Convention cut the territory of one chief, known by the high-sounding name of David Massouw Riet Taaibosch, in two, leaving part of it within the Republic and part of it outside. This was a state of things which the chief, who was perfectly content to live under the Transvaal Government, resented. The complication that thus arose was made the subject of voluminous reports and despatches, not one of which now possesses the smallest interest or value. While the complication was in progress, Massouw was attacked by another chief, Mankoroane, whose territory lay immediately to the westward, and between whom and Massouw there was a feud of long standing. Massouw, like the chiefs in Zululand, asked the assistance of European volunteers,

holding out that offer of land-grants which was ten years later so effectively employed by the Chartered Company when organising an invasion of Matabeleland. The result was that Mankoroane was beaten, the European allies of Massouw proceeding to claim their promised farms in Bechuanaland, beyond the Transvaal border. Like the farmers who about the same time assisted the Zulus, they established a Government of their own in a township laid out under the title of Vryburg, just as in northern Zululand a capital had been established under the title of Vryheid. No one was the worse for these changes, unless it was the chief Mankoroane, who had brought his fate upon himself by engaging in a war of aggression. No one was the worse; on the contrary, many people were the better, for a termination was put to disturbances which had seriously imperilled the peace of the whole surrounding country.

Unfortunately the chief Mankoroane was a special pet and *protégé* of missionary enterprise, represented in Bechuanaland by the Rev. John Mackenzie, by whom he and his people had been made the subject of glowing and it may be hoped sincere eulogies. Mr. Mackenzie, besides being gifted with all the fervour of an evangelist, was to a considerable extent animated by the prejudice against everything Dutch which marked the views of that most distinguished of South African missionaries, David Livingstone. It would be out of place to discuss the causes, direct or indirect, of this prejudice. It exercised, however, a most mischievous effect on the history of South Africa in the earliest stages of British occupation, and found a strong apologist in Livingstone, who, however, was far more indebted to the hostility of the British Government in Capetown for the misfortunes

that sent him into the interior than to any action by Dutch settlers in the Transvaal. Mr. Mackenzie's regard for his coloured flock was as strong as his dislike of all influences emanating from the Transvaal. By himself, in all probability, he could do nothing; but he had in England powerful religious and political supporters. The most influential of these supporters was the late Mr. W. E. Forster, who, having done his best to discredit the Transvaal burghers and their Government when the Pretoria Convention was being discussed, renewed his campaign with undiminished vigour when the revision of that convention was under consideration. Mr. Forster's peculiar relation to the philanthropic party on one side, and to the great body of English Non-conformists on the other, made him a very formidable opponent of the desire entertained by Mr. Gladstone's Government to place the relations between Great Britain and the South African Republic on a better footing. By his appearances on the platform at missionary meetings, by his attacks on the Government in the House of Commons, and by his open protests against the display of any public hospitality to President Kruger, who was then once more in England, Mr. Forster, there can be no doubt, succeeded in seriously embarrassing the Ministry which had been compelled to reject his Irish policy. And for a brief space events seemed to play into his hands; for during the absence of President Kruger in England, a subordinate official in the Transvaal took upon himself to hoist the Transvaal flag at a point beyond the admitted boundary of the Republic. Why this step was taken, whether out of well-meaning ignorance or from a secret desire to make mischief, has never been explained. But the

thing was done and the results were at once apparent. The act was one which immediately combined the Conservative party in England with the philanthropists, the missionaries, and the Empire League, in demanding the despatch of an Imperial force to South Africa, for the purpose of checking what were regarded as Transvaal encroachments, and settling the status of the territory lying along the western border of the South African Republic.

Pressed into a corner, Mr. Gladstone's Ministry felt bound to take some action to satisfy public feeling and a not inconsiderable section of its own supporters. Action was rendered easier by the reports received from Sir Hercules Robinson in Capetown, who, misled by the stir created by the Empire League, believed that the mass of public opinion in the Cape Colony was in favour of at least a show of force against the Transvaal. A military expedition was hastily organised, the troops already in Capetown being reinforced by further detachments from England. Sir Charles Warren, as the officer best acquainted with the country to which the expedition was bound, was placed in command, and, as illustrating the ascendancy gained by Mr. Forster's double backing of philanthropists and Nonconformists, Mr. Mackenzie was appointed as a sort of Deputy High Commissioner for Bechuanaland. Meantime the Ministry formed in Capetown in 1881, first under the Premiership of Sir John Molteno and afterwards under that of Sir Thomas Scanlen, had been thrown out of office. The ostensible cause of its defeat was neglect shown in connection with certain precautions against the introduction and spread of phylloxera; the real cause, however, lay in the growing

distrust felt by the Dutch party of a Ministry which had been instrumental in reintroducing direct Imperial control in Basutoland, and which was suspected of a certain amount of sympathy with the renewal of a policy of coercion against the Transvaal. A new Ministry was formed in which Sir Thomas Upington and Sir Gordon Sprigg, who had respectively held the office of Attorney-General and Premier from 1878 to 1881, were the leading figures. The carelessness as to the views of the Dutch party which had marked the action of these two Ministers in 1880, was now replaced by an eager desire to serve the interests of that party. While the expedition to Bechuanaland was in preparation, they did their utmost to promote an amicable settlement of the difficulty that had arisen, even visiting the then comparatively little known district of Bechuanaland in furtherance of this end. In this endeavour they did not, it must be confessed, receive much encouragement from Sir Hercules Robinson, who was still under the impression that the expedition was approved by the great bulk of the colonists.

The headquarters of the expedition duly arrived at Capetown, though whom it was intended to act against no one could with any authority declare. A story is told, whether on good authority or not, of how a military friend of Sir Charles Warren, meeting him on his arrival in Capetown, concluded a series of inquiries with the question, "Have you brought the enemy?" Unless the force was intended to operate against the Transvaal, there did not seem to be any foe formidable enough for the preparations that had been made. That the force was intended to act against the Transvaal was, it is true, currently believed amongst its officers and

by the extreme British section of Cape colonists ; but among the more sober majority it was regarded as incredible that the Imperial Government was anxious to provoke a general war between Dutch and English in South Africa in the interest of one or two native chiefs who occupied a position of absolute insignificance. Nevertheless, the appointment of so extreme a man as Mr. Mackenzie to an official position caused no small uneasiness, and served no doubt to give greater emphasis to the opinion expressed through a general election in the Cape Colony, which took place just at this critical time. The result of that general election was to show that while the disciples of the Empire League were a mere handful, the policy expressed by the appointment of Mr. Mackenzie to an official position and by the Warren expedition was strongly opposed by the great majority of Cape colonists, and that if that policy were persisted in a movement might be expected in the Cape Colony itself which might be most seriously prejudicial to the continuance of the British flag in South Africa.

The position in which Sir Hercules Robinson was placed by this sudden realisation of the true state of public opinion was a difficult one. Acting under a misconception, he had encouraged the despatch of the Warren expedition, and was thus in a sense committed to the policy which it expressed. At the same time the fact was brought vividly home to him that the expedition was a mistake, and that to allow it to go forward would result in far greater evils than those which, as had been imagined, it was intended to suppress. The proceedings of Sir Charles Warren and Mr. Mackenzie, when they arrived in Bechuanaland, were in no respect calcu-

lated to allay the High Commissioner's apprehensions. Regardless of principles of evidence and questions of jurisdiction, they seemed to be under the impression that they had a right to summarily convict and, if necessary, execute the farmers who, having taken up their land-grants, had formed a Government for the preservation of order. Mr. Van Niekerk, the head of the provisional Executive, was thrown into prison on a charge of murder, and it seemed only too likely that, between the military notions of Sir Charles Warren and the prejudices of Mr. Mackenzie, he stood a very good chance of being hanged first and tried afterwards. An appeal to the authority of the courts in Capetown served to dispel this illusion, and the influence of Sir Hercules Robinson, now alive to the real position of affairs, was exercised to check and circumscribe the action of Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Charles Warren. The latter had an interview with President Kruger, who had returned from England, the particulars of which have never been divulged, and that was all. The expedition, after a few weeks' stay in Bechuanaland, was withdrawn. It was suddenly discovered that the much-abused settlers in Stellaland, as they had called their Republic, were, after all, most respectable people. The Imperial Secretary, Sir Graham Bower, who was sent up from Capetown to report on the situation, testified in an official despatch to the number of pianos he heard being played round the newly formed township of Vryburg. Mr. Mackenzie resigned his appointment, while Sir Charles Warren returned to England to confound those who had most warmly supported him in South Africa with an exhibition of his intemperateness as a Commissioner of Police. It

is, however, an ill wind that blows nobody good, and the Cape Government, which shortly before had experienced some difficulty in raising a small loan at 5 per cent., managed to make use of the circumstances to persuade the Imperial Government to advance, at a low rate of interest, the money required to complete some eighty miles of railway from the Orange River to Kimberley, which was still the centre of Cape Colony solicitude.

How had this change in the situation been brought about? By the constitutional opposition of the Dutch party, the Bond party, in the Cape Colony. It was impossible to run an Imperial policy in the teeth of that opposition. Thus the only result of the agitation of the Empire League had been to confirm and strengthen the very force which it had aimed at counteracting. That is most important in itself; but it is even more important to bear in mind, in view of events that came later, that the party which could thus arrest Imperial action had also the power to encourage it. The danger of such a thing happening was not foreseen at the time, but it has been realised later. Meanwhile what was made clear to every one was that, whatever might be said as to the "paramount Power" in South Africa, the Dutch population was the dominant factor. On the whole, when the matter came to be quietly considered, no one objected to this. The fear of any effort being made to establish a general Republic in South Africa had passed by. It was seen that the strongest Bondsmen in the Cape Colony were thoroughly loyal to the British Crown, even though objecting to the direct exercise of Imperial authority. A sense of national unity began to spread from one capital of South Africa

to another, meeting always with growing encouragement as the extension of railways tended to bring distant populations into closer contact. To make matters better, the commercial depression, which had been so profound in 1885, began to pass off. The De Kaap goldfields were beginning to create a new import trade, and railway revenue and Customs receipts began to look up. The waves of the storm stirred up by the annexation of the Transvaal appeared to have at last swayed themselves to rest, and both classes of the European population, Dutch as well as English, were falling into that co-operation which was so beneficial, and always must be so beneficial, to both. So completely was this realised that when, a year or two later, Sir Hercules Robinson declared, in a farewell speech in Cape-town, that the "Imperial factor" had no longer a place in South Africa, the phrase was everywhere hailed with approval as expressing the arrival of a condition of things eminently calculated to promote the prosperity of South Africa, and in no sense derogatory to the legitimate influence of Great Britain in the South African Continent.

How long was this satisfactory state of things to last? And what were to be the disturbing forces?

CHAPTER X.

TRANSVAAL GOLD.

WITH the year 1887, or ten years after the annexation of the Transvaal, South African history entered upon a new phase. So far as South Africa itself was concerned, the irritations and agitations caused by that unlucky step had died away. It was believed on all hands that the day of Imperial intervention had gone by for ever. It was believed that, without any detriment whatever to the legitimate interests of Great Britain in South Africa, without any change in the existing relations between the British Government and the various South African Colonies and States, those States and Colonies would thenceforth be left free to frame their own laws, to control their relations with each other, and to adopt a joint policy with regard to matters in which they were all alike concerned. There were probably at that time the merest handful of persons in South Africa who regarded this prospect with any other feeling than that of satisfaction. If surprise should be felt that this sense of satisfaction should follow so closely on the strong division of feeling that existed only a few years before, the answer is to be found in the fact that South Africa is a country in which the grass grows

very quickly. Matters of dispute are easily forgotten when once the disturbing causes are removed. So long as British-born colonists believed there was a possibility of a renewal of active intervention in South African affairs by the Imperial Government, they were ready to take their places under the British flag, and to seek such advantages as might be derived from entering into contracts for the supplying of Imperial troops. When once, however, it became apparent that no more Imperial interference was to take place, they made common cause with their Dutch neighbours and set to work to develop the resources of the country. And here it is proper to say something with regard to the natural relations between the Dutch and English elements in South Africa. Newspapers and public men in England are continually insisting that the Dutch and English in South Africa must learn to live in harmony with each other, and they have praised Mr. Rhodes for having encouraged them to do so. What are the facts? In the first place, Dutch and English in South Africa never have had a quarrel and never would have a quarrel unless it was stirred up from outside by badly informed, and therefore mischievous, British statesmen and British Governments. In the next place, so far from Mr. Rhodes deserving any credit for an endeavour to induce British and Dutch to live on amicable terms, no man has used his influence more, directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, to set English and Dutch at loggerheads. This will perhaps, so far as Mr. Rhodes is concerned, be made plainer by and by. So far as the general question is concerned, it has to be remembered and borne in mind that ten years ago—to go no further

back—before the Kimberley mines were amalgamated, before Mr. Rhodes had made any appearance before the world as a political factor, Dutch and English were living side by side in South Africa without the smallest suspicion of ill-feeling, animated by the same hopes, working for the same ends, and rapidly drawing near the point at which the recognition of common interests would suggest the establishment of some kind of federal council. Lord Carnarvon, to put it briefly, by trying to force confederation, had driven the European races of South Africa asunder. The moment those races were left to themselves, the moment it was believed and understood that they were going to be left to themselves, they again became united and inspired with a desire to give their essential unity a clearer expression.

In 1886 the period of commercial depression was at an end. Financial difficulties resulting from this depression were being successfully grappled with both in the Cape Colony and Natal, the financial situation being in no small degree assisted by the attention that just then began to be turned to Colonial securities as openings for investment. How long this improvement might have lasted if there had only been the De Kaap goldfields to rely on it might be difficult to say. The promise given by the opening-up of the De Kaap goldfields, however, was followed by the greater splendour of the discoveries on the Witwatersrand. These discoveries, first made in 1886, did not attract any very general attention till the following year. By one of those curious contradictions of human nature, while the De Kaap fields, which have proved disappointing, were hailed with enthusiasm, the discovery of the

reefs at Witwatersrand provoked a good deal of scepticism. The thing seemed at first too good to be true. As, however, the news of the discoveries spread, it was realised that, on the spot which already began to be known as Johannesburg, there might be founded an industry which, outstripping all the ancient glories of the diamond industry at Kimberley, would bring a new wave of prosperity over the South African Continent, from which all its interests, and particularly the interests of the two Colonies, would immensely benefit. There was all the more reason to welcome the discovery, because the diamond industry was undoubtedly on the decline. There were, no doubt, as many diamonds to be found as ever, but the increased difficulties of working the mines had had the effect of greatly diminishing the activity of the industry, and consequently had diminished also the spending power of the community. Trade showed a disposition to fall off, and with it fell off the amounts received into the Colonial treasuries in the shape of import duties and railway receipts. The new trade with Johannesburg that began to spring up, not only promised to make up for any deficiency in the revenue derivable from the consumers of Kimberley, but promised to lead the country to a far higher level of prosperity than had ever been reached before. There was hardly a cloud perceptible in the sky. The very prosperity of South Africa, however, brought its own dangers, which came to be realised a few years later. It produced in England the same sort of regret that was experienced in Egypt when the Israelites had actually gone. Why had so rich a country been let go? Why should it not be recovered? It produced, too, the danger

that must result when unscrupulous men of capital are tempted by the possibility of being able to make themselves masters of almost unlimited wealth. And there was a third danger created which manifested itself in due time—the danger, namely, that lay in the ambition of Cape colonists to bring the administration of a country, about to be so enriched, under their own immediate control. The influence exercised by these several factors will be seen presently.

The rush to Johannesburg was a very different thing from the rush in earlier years to the Californian or Australian goldfields. Owing to the absence of alluvial gold, the individual digger soon found that his peculiar energies were not likely to secure a satisfactory result. The work to be done was work for joint-stock companies, and not for the enterprise of individual miners. The managers and directors of joint-stock companies, too, seemed often to think that their work had rather to do with the floating of companies than with the finding of gold. Mining operations were set about on a system which probably has never seen its equal in the whole history of mineral exploitation. Trenches were dug along the line, real or supposed, of the main reef, the stuff taken out being crushed in a thoroughly unscientific manner, and at no small expense. Meantime, however, the creation of scrip went on merrily. Companies blossomed forth in profusion, the shares being thrown on the market to be snapped up by greedy speculators. At every South African centre, not to speak of London itself, a general gambling set in. Men who had not previously possessed a five-pound note, suddenly found themselves the possessors, so far as the

market price of scrip went, of thousands. It was all chance work. It would be safe to say that not in one case out of a thousand did the men who began to find themselves rich owe their success to their own intelligence and forethought. They happened to be in the possession of scrip, and other people happened to be willing to pay a high price for it. The men who thus became rich by accident were unable to resist the idea that they were born speculators. They believed that they owed their success to their own judgment, and trusted that judgment to lead them on to further successes. The consequence was that, instead of getting out of their obligations as soon as they saw a profit on their transactions, they went on widening their responsibilities. The result was what was to be expected, though their boasted foresight had never led them to expect it. The inflation of prices suddenly ceased. The Banks, becoming cautious, threw a jet of cold water on the vapour-like values of Johannesburg properties. Those values collapsed. The wealth that had been so fictitious disappeared. It was in vain that all those whose interests were at stake persistently talked the market up. The market just as persistently fell. Bankruptcies, disappearances, and suicides took the place of new flotations. If, within a twelvemonth after the height of the "boom" of 1888, an investigation had been made of the position of those who promoted it, it would probably have been found that the men who had made money and kept it could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The collapse, however, serious as it was, saved the gold industry. So much money was locked up in gold-mining properties that it became a

matter of necessity to discover what could be rescued from the general wreck. In the wild days of the "boom" solid work had been to a very considerable degree neglected. It paid better to snap up a piece of land and float a company on the strength of a prospectus more or less fraudulent, than to engage in actual mining operations. Still, in spite of this, the gold was undoubtedly there, and, if a way out of the depression was to be found, the only thing to do was to take steps to secure an output. Experience began to show, too, that a very much smaller percentage of gold could be made to pay than had been at first imagined. In the days of the "boom" nothing under a "two-ounce" property would be looked at. It presently came to be recognised that to talk about two-ounce properties was to provoke scepticism, or even suspicion of fraud. An ounce to the ton would pay; fifteen, twelve, ten, or even eight pennyweights could be made to pay, if proper economy was observed and appropriate processes adopted. Further than this, the more the matter was looked into the more public opinion became convinced of the immense extent and resources of the Witwatersrand reefs. A new confidence sprang up, which received continual encouragement from the results obtained by those who had capital to invest in machinery and other appliances. Companies which had been left high and dry on the collapse of the "boom" were reconstructed and set afloat again. The monthly output began steadily to increase, and as it increased the foundations of the industry became more and more solid. The process, it is true, was a slow one. Public confidence in the Witwatersrand mines had been severely shaken, and was not to be

regained in a day. Gradually, however, the force of accomplished facts began to tell; the soundness of the industry was vindicated, and the position of Johannesburg as one of the most important of gold-producing centres was established.

Before, however, the vindication of the value of the Witwatersrand goldfields was complete, many things had happened, the direct or indirect results of the discovery of those goldfields. It is of these events that some account must be given, and their relationship to each other made clear. One of the very first of these results—a result apparent even before the days of the “boom” of 1888—was the thrusting to the front of the question of a Customs Union. The real origin of this question rests far back in the days when the independence of the two Republics of South Africa was recognised by the British Government. It was a condition granted to the Orange Free State, if not to the South African Republic, by the British Government of the day that the State should be entitled to its due share of the Customs duties collected at the Colonial ports on goods imported for Free State use. That promise, however, had remained unfulfilled. The duties collected at Colonial ports, whether in the Cape Colony or Natal, went into the Colonial treasury, and the Free State had never been in a position, or had never had the mind, to press for a readjustment of the matter in accordance with former pledges. It is highly to the credit of members of the Natal Legislature that they were the first to make an effort to deal with this question in a fair and equitable spirit. As early as 1882 the Natal Legislature had agreed by resolution to invite the Governments of the two Republics to take part

in a conference for the purpose of considering the subject of a Customs Union. The proposal came, not from the Executive, who were at that time responsible to the Secretary of State, but from among the elected members of the Legislature. Owing probably to this fact, action was delayed. The proposal had to receive the sanction of the High Commissioner in Capetown and of the Secretary of State in London, and the High Commissioner was naturally not very eager to move in a matter with which his own political advisers in Capetown were anything but sympathetic. In Capetown, indeed, the action of the Natal Legislature was regarded as presumptuous and impertinent. The Transvaal Government declined the invitation, no doubt out of regard for the very favourable treaty that had been made with Portugal—one of the few practical measures achieved by President Burgers—in view of the construction some day of a railway from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria. The Free State Government, however, accepted the invitation, and as a result a conference between delegates from Natal and the Free State was held at Harriswith, a small Free State town near the Natal border, in 1884. The conference did not result in an agreement as to any practical steps for the forming of a Customs Union, but it passed two resolutions by which the principles to be included in any such union were laid down. These resolutions, which endeavoured to define the respective rights of an inland and a maritime State, are still worthy of reference as supplying a possible basis for some general South African Customs Union which may come into existence in the future. They ran as follows:—

“A Maritime State has no right to charge a

neighbouring friendly Power with an arbitrary Customs Tariff.

“An Inland State has no right to claim a passage for its produce and goods to and from the port of a Maritime State, without contributing a fair sum to the cost of the Government of the Maritime State.”

The Cape Government took no notice of the Harriswith Conference and its results—at least, no notice that showed any appreciation of the direction in which the conference aimed. The only notice which it took was discernible in its establishment of a Custom-house on the frontier between Kimberley and the Free State, so as to acquire the power of levying tolls on any produce sent overland from Natal to Kimberley or on any goods for Kimberley imported through Natal. The question dropped out of sight for some years, during which the competition between Natal, a low-tariff Colony, and the Cape, a high-tariff Colony, for the interior trade of South Africa, became more and more marked. When, however, the discovery of the Witwatersrand goldfields gave a fresh impetus to the import trade of the whole country, the question of a Customs Union was revived, this time at the instance of the Cape Government. The reason for this action on the part of the Cape Government was not very far to seek. Owing to its geographical position, the port of Natal—Durban—was far more likely to attract the new trade with Johannesburg than were any of the ports of the Cape Colony. Every mile of land-carriage, in a country where speeds are slow and rates are high, is a consideration, and the route to Johannesburg through Natal had an advantage of some two hundred miles over the route from the nearest Cape Colony port. In addition to this

advantage in distance, Natal enjoyed the advantage of a far lower tariff than that enforced in the Cape Colony, so that it seemed in every way possible that the whole of the Johannesburg trade—a commercial factor of immense importance, as could even then be seen—would adopt the Natal route. It was with a view to prevent this, if possible, that the Cape Government proposed, at the end of 1887, the holding of a conference at Capetown for the purpose of discussing proposals for a general Customs Union for South Africa. The Transvaal, the Free State, and Natal, all received invitations to send delegates to this conference. The Transvaal once more declined the invitation, but the Free State and Natal accepted it, the Free State Government doubtless seizing the opportunity of securing, if it could, some practical recognition of the rights conferred upon that State when its independence had been guaranteed some five-and-thirty years previously.

The motives animating the Cape Government in taking this step are deserving of consideration, chiefly by reason of the fact that the same class of motives will be found at work at several points in the history of the events of the next few years. The remark may be ventured again that it must always be a matter for regret that the Cape Colony, though occupying the leading place in the South African community both on historical and other grounds, has seldom been able to deal with South African matters save in a grasping and selfish spirit. The Colony has without doubt contained men of wide views and unselfish purposes, and among these may be enumerated the late Mr. Saul Solomon and the present leader of the Cape Opposition, Mr. Rose-Innes. It was Mr. Saul Solomon who inspired the just and constitutional

resistance to Lord Carnarvon's wild scheme of confederation. But it could hardly be true to ascribe to Mr. Molteno and his colleagues in 1877 a deep appreciation of the principles which influenced Mr. Saul Solomon. The attitude of Mr. Molteno and his colleagues was then in no small degree traceable to the fact that the confederation scheme seemed to threaten that political supremacy which Capetown had acquired through purchasing, by means of a superfluous railway, the support of the Frontier vote. That there was an element of calculation in the moral support given from the Western Province of the Cape Colony to the Transvaal revolt has been hinted already, and the presence of that element of calculation is to be very clearly traced in events that subsequently arose. That the Cape Government would, if it could, have forced Natal into a confederation just after the Transvaal war, there can be little doubt. The attempted appointment of Sir Hercules Robinson's nominee to the control of affairs in Natal was intended to serve that end. The heavy expenditure in which the Cape Colony had become involved over the Basuto war created financial anxiety, and that financial anxiety led Cape politicians to regard with dislike the persistency with which Natal held on to the lower tariff. Between 1887 and 1888 the Natal tariff had been constantly in the eye of Ministers in Capetown, who had gone so far as to induce the Cape Parliament to empower them, should it become necessary, to grant a rebate of duty on goods forwarded to the interior to a point which would place the Cape and Natal tariffs practically on a level. When the discoveries of gold at Witwatersrand showed how valuable the trade of the Transvaal was likely to be, the Cape Government

became all the more impressed with the necessity of putting a check on the commerce of Natal by inducing that Colony to abandon its low tariff and to accept, under the conditions of a Customs Union, a tariff very considerably higher. In this case, of course, the right of the Free State to a considerable proportion of the duties collected on goods imported for Free State consumption would have to be recognised ; but even this was regarded as a small price to pay for putting a fiscal brake on the import trade of Natal, whose geographical position with regard to the Transvaal already gave her an immense advantage.

It was, then, for the most purely selfish reasons that the Cape Ministry, towards the end of 1887, proposed to take the question of a Customs Union in hand. The proposal was warmly supported by the Bond party, which had its own objects to serve. One of these objects was to obtain increased protection for the agricultural industries of the Cape Colony over a very much wider South African area. Another was to secure the entry of Cape wines into the Transvaal duty free, one of the proposed principles of the Customs Union—and a most proper one—being the free interchange of South African products. The Transvaal declined to take part in the conference, its refusal being greatly, though for the moment secretly, resented by the Bond party in the Cape Colony. The conference duly assembled at Capetown early in 1888. Owing to the existing circumstances the Cape Government anticipated an easy victory for the policy by which it was inspired. The delegates from the Free State, seeing the advantages that must result from the recognition of their long-standing claim, were not disposed to

be critical, and allowed the tariff to be manipulated to the advantage of Cape Colony products. The delegates from Natal, too, seemed inclined to be accommodating. Finally, a convention was provisionally agreed to, subject to the confirmation of the Legislatures of the three States represented at the conference.

That the Cape Legislature would confirm the convention, was a foregone conclusion. The convention was one by which the Cape had everything to gain and nothing to lose. The Free State Volksraad, though not altogether approving of some of the details of the agreement, was unwilling to lose the opportunity afforded of securing the formal recognition of a long-disputed claim. In Natal, however, the matter was viewed in quite another light. The principle of South African unity, which the agreement suggested, was no doubt a fine thing in its way, but it was necessary for Natal colonists to think twice before they consented, for the sake of an appearance of South African unity, to an agreement by which they had everything to lose and little or nothing to gain. The position was not an easy one to decide on. If Natal adhered to the proposed union it would gain the advantage of securing a free market for some of its produce—not for all, as sugar was excepted—throughout the Free State and the Cape Colony. It would, on the other hand, lose the direct and indirect advantages—advantages of no small importance—resulting from the maintenance of a low tariff. If Natal declined to enter the Customs Union it would preserve all the advantages of a low tariff multiplied by the advantages already visible in an increasing Transvaal trade. On the other hand, there was the certainty

that Natal products would continue to be taxed in the Cape Colony and the Free State, while a fiscal barrier would be drawn across the path of the general trade between the Free State and Natal. The Natal Legislature, acting with a courage that deserves the appreciation of the friends of free trade, decided to adhere to its low tariff, to make it lower still, if possible, and to keep outside the Customs Union.

Thus, as one of the first results of the gold-discoveries at Witwatersrand, a South African Customs Union came into existence. It has been called, that is to say, a South African Customs Union, but such a union it is certainly not. It is a mere one-sided agreement between two South African States, one of which—the Cape Colony—clings to it because it was framed for its own advantage, while the other—the Free State—clings to it because it recognises, though inequitably, an equitable principle. It is a union which no other self-governed South African State will ever join, and which stands in the way of the establishment of anything more equitable. If ever, indeed, there is to be a South African Customs Union worthy of the name it can only be through the abrogation, as a first step, of the union now existing. And yet, judging by what is sometimes said and written, it would almost seem as though this one-sided and obstructive union is a source of satisfaction to persons professing to take an interest in the welfare and progress of South Africa !

CHAPTER XI.

THE INTRUDING MILLIONAIRE.

THE history of the discovery and development of the Kimberley diamond-fields is one of the romances of mineral exploitation. Five-and-twenty years ago, or a little more, the Cape Colony was a purely agricultural community. Its trade was insignificant ; its means of intercommunication were rudimentary ; its towns were the sleepy centres for the interchange of agricultural and pastoral products. Then, too, as now, a vast portion of the area of the Colony was practically desert—an undulating wilderness, intersected here and there by sharp, stony ridges, and covered with a dark-green bush, never growing more than about a foot high, known as “Karoo scrub.” Blighted by frost in winter, scorched by the sun in summer, scantily traversed by rivers which dry up into stagnant pools, this desert may well be regarded as one of the most forbidding areas on the earth’s surface. To travel over it by railway is a penance ; to have been compelled to travel over it in any other way could only have been suggestive of purgatory.

It was on a desolate farm in the midst of this desolate wilderness that some one by accident kicked up a pebble that seemed a little unlike other

pebbles. How that pebble came to be on the surface of the ground cannot but seem puzzling to those who consider the nature of the geological formation to which it belonged. There is absolutely nothing on the surface to indicate the presence of a South African diamond-mine. There may be at this moment mines as rich as any that have been discovered in the very same district, which have never yet been hit on by the most careful prospector, and which may never be hit upon at all. Six inches of alluvial soil, spread over the surface by successive summer rains, may be effective in concealing treasure-houses of—as the world goes—ineestimable wealth. Underneath that thin covering of drifted soil may lie one of those vast pipes or craters, dipping down between hard perpendicular walls to an unfathomable distance, and filled to the brim with the volcanic *débris* in which, like solid bubbles from some stupendous chemical processes, lie the diamonds of fashionable commerce. What was the condition of the earth when the processes that have gone to produce the diamond were in active operation? By what terrible explosions and upheavals was the earth's crust tormented? It is difficult for the most skilful geologist to say. What we know is that, rather more than twenty-five years ago, some one strolling idly across the surface of one of those immense receptacles of nature's unconsidered leavings kicked up a pebble that turned out to be a diamond.

And then? Then, of course, came the rush. So promising a carcase could not fail to attract the eagles. There had been nothing like it known in human history. California and Australia had had their attractions, and men had got rich there who till then had never possessed a sixpence. Gold had

its attractions, but diamonds were irresistible. Courage and muscle, added to a bucket and a pick, represented all the capital that was necessary. If those bent on the adventure could not reach the spot by coach, they would travel by ox-wagon; if they could not travel by ox-wagon, they would walk. The amount of hardship suffered by those who sought the South African diamond-fields in the earlier days, whether they walked or travelled by coach or by wagon, must have been immeasurable. It was not until the fields had been in existence for ten years that there was a railway over even half the distance—the five or six or seven hundred miles—between the port of debarkation and the centre of the adventurer's hope. What misery to women and children crammed into those tightly-packed coaches that traversed the desolation of the Karoo, now overwhelmed in blinding storms of sand, now struggling through the morasses left by torrential rains! And then the roughness and hardship of the life on the fields, when once they were reached—the glad acceptance of shelter in canvas or wooden shanties, useless to keep out the heat and penetrated by every shower. As for the moral and social aspects of that life, they were what they might be expected to be. If there was a rough honesty among men, and a fair amount of kindness among women, other virtues might do as they pleased. It was enough that there were chances of becoming wealthy that might turn up for any one. All day long the dice were being thrown out of the box in the great game of diamond-hunting, and the dice were as impartial as the blindest justice.

Matters got into a more regular kind of groove after a time. There were three principal mines, and

the main roads leading from one to the other supplied the outlines of a town, lesser thoroughfares being determined by the direction originally taken by the alley-ways between rows of tents or shanties. The life, if hard, had the advantage of being simple. A claim was easily marked out, and on that claim it behoved its possessor to work as long as he could stand or see, sending up to his partners the bucketfuls of soil that might, any one of them, contain the equivalent of a moderate fortune. There were difficulties experienced, of course, as the workings went lower. The *débris* from a claim higher up would fall and block the work of a claim lower down, or your own soil would take its way down into some one else's block. There came a day, too, when a sudden panic shook the mines from end to end. The workers who had gone deepest—perhaps some sixty feet—suddenly found that the yellow soil from which they had been extracting diamonds came to a stop. There was no more of it, but instead there was a pale blue gravel which seemed the end of everything. Really it was the beginning, for the blue soil turned out to be the true home of the diamond. Nevertheless, the fear was real while it lasted, and the timid ones were, in not a few cases, anxious enough to sacrifice their claims to workers who were a little bolder. Deeper down went the claims into the blue, the need for mechanical appliances becoming greater every day, and every day fresh difficulties arising through disputes between the claim-holders. But still the work went on, subject to a terrible vigilance over pilferers and to the keen competition of the brokers whose little wooden offices clustered along the edge of the deepening chasm. There was order of a kind and

law of a kind, coupled with a spirit of independence that, while intolerant of red-tape, could afford to applaud and refresh the British troops sent up to repress a justifiable insurrection.

The work went on, the chasm grew deeper. The old difficulty that arose when claim fell in upon claim was succeeded by a new and more formidable difficulty of a similar kind. The walls of the mine—the “reef,” as it was not very appropriately called—began to fall in upon the whole area of the mine. Before this, in order to avoid disputes and interruptions, claims had been thrown together into blocks, and blocks had been amalgamated into companies. That expedient had served for a time, but it would serve no longer when a heavy fall of “reef” might stop the working of two or three companies at once. The Government ought to do something—the Government that was practically living upon the diamond industry, and received an enormously increased revenue in the shape of duties levied on goods imported for consumption on the fields. The Government did, to some extent, consider certain schemes and proposals for enabling the golden goose to continue to lay without interruption. The schemes were for the most part wild ones. The framers of one scheme that was not regarded as by any means the wildest proposed that, at an expense of some millions, raised by the Colony as a loan, the whole of the sides of the mines should be sloped off to a certain depth and distance. While these schemes were under discussion, a “boom” came on. The flotation of companies took the place of the search for diamonds, just as in Johannesburg, some years later, the flotation of companies took the place of the search for gold.

The "boom" was engineered under all the usual conditions. The men with money went in and got out again, bringing their sheaves with them, and leaving it to timorous and unsubstantial men to bear the brunt of the collapse. When the period of collapse had gone by, the companies whose shares had gone up like the rocket and had come down again like the stick, had somehow to manage to show their shareholders something for their money. Sometimes they could, sometimes they could not, dividing their time between living on hope and threatening to shut down. The diamonds were still there, no doubt, but the cost of getting at them swallowed up the profits to be obtained in a variable market. And thus it came about that the industry dwindled and Kimberley drooped, till matters were in such a state that a Colonial Ministry, possessed of a little courage and foresight, could have made the diamond-fields a national industry almost on its own terms.

It never was given, however, to Cape Ministries to possess much foresight. It was enough if somehow revenue could be made to balance expenditure, and if those who happened to be in office could manage to secure sufficient support to keep them there. It came to be seen by more persons than one that if the diamond industry could be placed under a single control it could be made to pay in far better proportion than it had ever paid under the system of separate companies. Gradually, with a view to the promotion of this end, ownership of the mines became consolidated into two great groups. There was the group controlling the Kimberley mine, headed by Mr. Barnato; there was the group controlling the De Beers mine,

headed by Mr. Cecil Rhodes. For some time it seemed doubtful which of these groups would absorb the other. At last some members of the Barnato group became alarmed, and began selling. The Rhodes group took advantage of the momentary weakness, and, with the assistance of the Rothschilds, bought the Barnato group out. A facsimile of the cheque for upwards of five and a half millions paid by De Beers Company as the purchase price of the assets of the principal owners of the Kimberley mine—the Central Company—is still sold in Kimberley as a photographic curiosity. By virtue of the circumstances under which the transaction took place, certain personal arrangements became apparent in the directorate of the De Beers Consolidated Mines. Mr. Barnato was accorded the position of a "Life Governor," and an important place on the Board was assigned to a representative of the Rothschilds.

There are two points of view from which this amalgamation of the South African diamond-mines can be regarded—the commercial and the political. It has sometimes been alleged that, from a commercial point of view, the amalgamation ruined the diamond industry and ruined Kimberley. A careful consideration of all the circumstances serves to show that this charge is not well founded. Diamond mining is now an expensive and difficult industry, carried on in the face of a most uncertain market. The market for diamonds is essentially a limited one. The world will not take more than a certain quantity annually—that is, at prices which will pay for the cost of mining. If an attempt is made to force any larger quantity on the market, the price at once flies down to a level which is unprofitable.

Hence, if there ever was any commodity in respect of which a restriction of output was justified, that commodity is to be found in the products of the Kimberley diamond-mines. In the early days of the diamond-fields, when mining was cheap and easy, irregularity in prices did not so much matter. But, as mining became more difficult and more expensive, irregularity in prices began to matter very much indeed. As the open mine went deeper, the difficulty of working it as an open mine became more and more formidable. Extensive blocks of claims were liable to be temporarily obliterated by falls of "reef," and had to remain unproductive till the fallen *débris* had been cleared away. The only chance for the profitable working of the mines lay in the possibility of working them underground, by means of shafts and levels. That, however, was a method involving no small expense, not to speak of the risks created underground from the existence of two or more systems of management and control. Competition between the various companies, moreover, would infallibly affect the diamond market, and lead to an instability of prices from which all companies would alike suffer. In all probability, if the amalgamation had not taken place, the companies carrying on the industry would have gone into liquidation, and the condition of Kimberley would have been very considerably worse than it is to-day. The amalgamation has kept the industry alive. It has rendered possible scientific methods of working which, though more expensive in the first instance, are more economical in the end and in a very large degree safer. Indeed, from a commercial and scientific point of view, the Kimberley diamond-mines are as well worked as any mines in the world.

Meantime the control maintained over the annual output prevents any serious variation or depreciation in market values.

There is, however, another side of the question. The Kimberley diamond-mines, by reason of the impulse their discovery gave to the commercial and industrial life of the Cape Colony, and indeed of the whole of South Africa, occupied the position of a national possession. Occupying this position, their existence was interwoven with an immense number of interests, all of which deserved consideration. Had the Cape Government shown a fair amount of judgment and foresight it would have acquired the diamond-mines for the country, would have arranged well-considered conditions for their working, and would, in view of the possibility of their being one day worked out, have applied the profits earned to the extinction of Colonial liabilities. After having missed its chance of effecting this purchase on economical terms, the Cape Government allowed this national property—for a property which is responsible for half the trade of a country can only be regarded in this light—to pass into the hands of a limited number of private individuals without exercising a moment's supervision or imposing a single condition. The industry, as now carried on, is absolutely untaxed in any way. It contributes not a penny to the State Treasury, and the mines are not even rated for the benefit of the town of Kimberley. What is the result? That the amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond-mines has placed in the hands of a very small group of persons a wealth far out of proportion to the average individual wealth of the country, and has thus given those persons a most dangerous power of political

ascendancy. South Africa is not a rich country. There are in it very few men indeed who are possessed of more than a competence, and there are a very great many who, even while they may occupy leading social or political positions, find life a continuous effort and struggle. In the United States a millionaire or two more or less would not much matter. In South Africa the mere force of comparison gives to the millionaire an importance and consideration which is altogether demoralising. The danger would be there even if the millionaire were modestly content to keep himself to himself, amusing himself with such trifles as a luxurious steam-yacht or the decoration of a house in Park Lane. As it happens, the millionaire of South Africa—the typical millionaire—is anything but content with such personal amusements. He aims at seizing every possible advantage which his position can confer upon him, and is not only willing but eager to make his influence felt in every corner of the social and political structure. He believes—and unfortunately has been given only too much ground for believing—that money is the one end for which every man lives, and that there is no kind of moral principle which is not to be overridden at an ascertainable price. And while thus cynical as to the moral stability of his equals, the typical South African millionaire is completely careless as to the interests and feelings of his inferiors. The man to whom he pays wages must have no will of his own ; the worker must feel that the only way to avoid the risk of dismissal without notice and without reason is to suppress every instinct of moral or political independence. That under such conditions as these the man who can descend to act the spy upon his

fellows rises into favour, is inevitable. And thus it has come about that the Kimberley which in its earlier days was rowdy and dissolute enough, has in its later days, since the famous amalgamation of the diamond-mines, become a place where both moral principle and personal liberty are at a discount, and where the greatest crime that can be committed is for a wage-earner to believe that he may exercise his political rights as a British subject living in a British Colony.

This intrusion of the millionaire, of the living incarnation of the spirit of Mammon, into South African politics is a factor of the situation the importance of which cannot be overestimated. It represents the accession of a strenuous and persistent desire to make use, by every possible means, of disproportionate wealth for purely selfish ends, utterly regardless of the moral principles that may be violated and the lives that may be sacrificed in the pursuance of this desire. There is no kind of machinery which the incarnation of Mammon is ashamed to employ in furthering its aims. The unguarded virtues of men are laid under contribution as well as their unguarded vices. If an appeal to the spirit of patriotism can send a breath into the gilded sail, that appeal will be made. If religious sentiment or enthusiasm can be induced to afford its assistance, religious sentiment and enthusiasm will be prostituted without an instant's compunction. Justice is a figment ; deceit and truth are equal forces ; bribery is the most natural means to the accomplishment of minor ends. It has not often happened, it does not often happen, in the course of human history that the strongest condemnation and contempt which men can feel may be justifiably entertained. There

are circumstances, however, when the entertaining and the expression of such condemnation and contempt become almost a duty, and when toleration and silence would be little short of a crime.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHARTER AND THE RAND.

THE amalgamation of the Kimberley mines, while it served to produce the intruding millionaire, placed in the hands of that personage powers of no ordinary kind. It was not only in South Africa that his personality was discernible. The man who can induce the archangels of European finance to take his business in hand becomes possessed of no inconsiderable means of influencing in his favour the highest Imperial authorities and the most brilliant stars of the social firmament. A personage whom financial archangels take in hand is a person who may be able to place opportunities of becoming rich in the way of those whose chief possessions are their titles, and in whom Imperial authorities, with the approval of the *Times*, may safely trust. Hence it was only to be expected that, with limitless ambition on one side, and a disposition of friendliness on the other, the amalgamation of the Kimberley mines, by which a great national property passed into the possession and control of a very limited number of private persons, would prove the prelude to further adventures of a somewhat similar character.

Nor was this to be anticipated merely on financial grounds. South Africa, as Lord Kimberley com-

plained to Sir Hercules Robinson some years previously, had always been a trouble to the Colonial Office. During the six or seven years that succeeded the signing of the Pretoria Convention, it is true, a sort of partial enlightenment had come about. It began to be suspected that South Africa could take care of itself apart from the perennial fidgets of Downing Street, and that the "elimination of the Imperial factor," which had become apparent about the end of the year 1887, was possibly a blessing in disguise. No doubt some tinge of Egyptian regret was felt when, in the following year, it began to be apparent that the Transvaal was entering on a career of splendid financial progress and success. Still it seemed useless to sigh for the re-establishment there of British rule. The retrocession of the country had taken place, had been approved, was done with; there was no good end to be gained by sighing over spilt milk. Colonial Ministers might fret; Tory Premiers might fume; but there the thing was that the South African Republic had been allowed to go, while the recollection of the troubles which the direct Imperial act of annexation had caused did not seem to encourage the idea of any fresh attempts in the same direction.

This was no doubt very much the frame of mind that possessed King Ahab when he had been repulsed over his proposed purchase of the vineyard of Naboth. The sense of vexation rendered him all the more ready to accept some other road to the desired end, if only it could be done without a scandal. The thing could be done, only he must not ask questions as to the means to be employed. It may be surmised that a similar comedy, on a larger scale, was performed in the neighbourhood of Whitehall when

Mr. Rhodes, fresh from the amalgamation of the Kimberley mines, made suggestions for the granting of a charter to a joint-stock company which had been formed for the purpose of exploiting a concession obtained from Lo Bengula, the King of Matabeleland. Whatever may have been thought then, whatever suspicions of the real drift of Mr. Rhodes' proposals may have been dimly entertained, every one can now see plainly enough that the talk about "Imperial Englishmen" and "painting the map of South Africa red" had a definite meaning. What was in the wind was a distinct design against the independence of the Dutch Republics in South Africa, the Transvaal especially, as being the richest, and the bringing about of that subjection of South Africa to Imperial influences which had been aimed at by Lord Carnarvon in his scheme of confederation, and had been defeated by the strenuous resistance of the peoples at whose expense the scheme was to be carried out. This time, however, there was to be no direct Imperial action. The "Imperial factor" had been "eliminated"; every one was content that it should be eliminated. A new phrase had been invented, which before very long was consecrated by official adoption. The watchword of the new crusade against the vineyard of Naboth, now immensely more valuable and attractive than before, was to be "Imperialism in Colonialism." It is not to be supposed that the ultimate end to be achieved was expressed in so many words. But, in the light of subsequent events, there can be little room for doubting that when Mr. Rhodes applied for a charter for his proposed British South Africa Company, he produced as one of the arguments in favour of the granting of his request the prospect, if he were given

time enough and support enough, of bringing back the South African Republic into the Imperial fold. It was all the more in his favour that he made his request to a Tory Government, naturally not unwilling to recover ground which they believed had been lost in South Africa. Had the request been made to a Liberal Government, it is possible that it would have been unsuccessful. And yet Liberal Governments have at times not been above giving the consecration of a charter to a speculative adventure.

The granting of the charter to the British South Africa Company may justifiably be regarded as the most extraordinary usurpation of power ever perpetrated since the Popes gave over the Peruvians into the hands of Pizarro. On the basis of a shadowy understanding with other European Powers as to the limits of their respective "spheres of influence" in the African Continent, the Imperial Government virtually gave away the whole "hinterland" of South Africa into the absolute possession of seven persons, most of whom had never set foot in the country, and one of whom was not even a British subject. The British Government had never for a single moment exercised authority or control in the immense area thus presented to Mr. Rhodes and his friends, nor had even so much as pretended to possess the right to exercise authority or control. The act was an act in defiance of the natural rights of all the South African Governments and peoples, by virtue of whose industry and enterprise and assumption of financial responsibility the back country had alone acquired any kind of commercial or political value. It was an act which would have been paralleled if, in the middle of last century, Great

Britain had made half a dozen private persons a present of the whole American Continent westward of the Mississippi and Missouri. Such an act as that, one may well believe, would have precipitated, and justly precipitated, by several years the struggle that resulted in the independence of America. It may be asked why the step encountered no resistance or protest in South Africa. It may be answered that in the Republics, and among the great silent mass of Dutch settlers in the British Colonies, the news of this step excited both indignation and protest. As has happened again and again, however, when the sensibilities of the Dutch population of South Africa have been overridden, expression of opinion was slow, and hardly came to the notice of the ordinary purveyors of public intelligence. As regards opinion in the two British Colonies, that was at the moment under the control of certain influences that tended to produce indifference as to constitutional questions. The discovery of the Johannesburg goldfields had set every one to work to make money. Everything was going to prosper with every one; why trouble about such an abstract question as the right of the Imperial Government to make a present to seven individuals of the "hinterland" of South Africa? It might be wrong, but it did not much matter. It must be added, too, that in the Cape Colony, and especially in political circles in Capetown, where the selfish principle in politics tends to come uppermost, any constitutional objection that might have been felt was counterbalanced partly by the consideration that the Colony might gain something at the expense of the other South African communities, and partly by a secret satisfaction that something had happened to annoy the Transvaal, which had unoblingly refused

to join the proposed Customs Union. There is, too, another reason why the granting of the charter was not challenged in the Cape Colony. Mr. Saul Solomon, whose alertness and experience and public spirit had prompted the opposition to Lord Carnarvon's confederation scheme, had, owing to failing health, retired from public life, leaving the Cape Colony with a crowd of politicians, no doubt, but without a single statesman.

The charter was granted, conferring what were practically sovereign rights over 750,000 square miles of territory upon three members of the British aristocracy, one of whom condescended, after several years had elapsed, to visit the country placed under his control. What made the transaction more singular was that it was based on a concession from the Matabele king, who himself possessed no sovereign power over a very large part of the area involved. It has in more recent times been contended that the charter was granted in order to exclude the Germans, who were disposed to overstep the limits of "influence" assigned to them in other portions of the African Continent. It is enough to say that not a word was heard about the Germans at the time the charter was granted; it should be more than enough to point out that, if German influence was the thing that was dreaded, nothing could be more suicidal than to include a German subject among the seven original grantees. The dread of German interference has been altogether an afterthought. But, assuming that the intrusion of German influence was dreaded in respect of the country south of the Zambesi, what was the natural and proper and constitutional course to follow? Surely to appeal to the several Govern-

ments interested in the South African "hinterland," and induce them—as could most easily have been done—to act together for the exclusion of German influence. That, however, would have meant statesmanship, and South Africa is unfortunately a country on which it is believed that statesmanship is thrown away.

It was the recapture of the Transvaal that was the central, though secret, object of the granting of the charter to the British South Africa Company, and that object was doubtless considered of sufficient importance to justify the commission of all kinds of anomalies and irregularities. That being the object, Mr. Rhodes, as the moving and managing spirit in the Chartered Company, was to be given "a free hand," as the spouse of Ahab was given "a free hand" in respect of the means to be taken to bring about the annexation of Naboth's vineyard. It was in keeping with the usual practice of theatrical entertainments that the comedy—the solid piece to be played—was preceded by a farce. To the amusement and astonishment of all South Africa, a group of Lifeguardsmen were conveyed to the Cape, to be presented to the Matabele king, presumably as samples of the warriors with whom he would have to contend if he should ever venture to become troublesome. The more serious work commenced when it became necessary to consider the appointment of a successor to Sir Hercules Robinson in the joint offices of Governor of the Cape of Good Hope and High Commissioner in South Africa. The delay in making the appointment was very considerable, and was accounted for in all kinds of ways. The explanation most widely accepted was that in his farewell speech on leaving Capetown Sir

Hercules Robinson had expressed himself on the subject of the "elimination of the Imperial factor" too openly to suit the views of a Tory Ministry. That in thus speaking he had the complete sympathy and approval of almost the whole of the European population of South Africa, there can be no doubt. Had he been reappointed, as for some time it was expected would be the case, the Imperial Government would have been understood as expressing an agreement with his views which at the moment it was very far from feeling. Failing Sir Hercules Robinson, the delay that occurred seemed to suggest that there was considerable difficulty experienced in selecting a successor. At last it was known that the appointment had been accepted by Sir Henry Loch, who, after nearly twenty years' enjoyment of the quiet charm of the Isle of Man, had been for five years Governor of Victoria. What Sir Henry Loch's appointment to the most important post in British South Africa signified did not at first seem by any means certain. The uncertainty was soon to be dispelled.

Meantime, while these events had been in progress, the development of the gold-mining industry in the Transvaal had been proceeding by rapid strides. Although the monthly output from the mines was still not very considerable, it had been well established that the industry was a permanent one, capable of an almost indefinite expansion. What had at first been merely a mining camp on the Witwatersrand had, in an almost incredibly short space of time, grown into a crowded and bustling town. Although still unconnected by railway with any other part of South Africa, it had become the central point of a continually increasing passenger

traffic, several lines of coaches filling in the gaps still left between the city of golden promise and the terminal points of the Colonial railways. The route through Kimberley was most favoured, but a busy traffic was also kept up by two routes—one over the historic ground of Laing's Nek, the other over the buttresses of the Drakensberg and through the Free State—from Natal, which, owing to the geographical advantages of its position, absorbed the great bulk of the goods traffic. The journey by coach from the terminal points of the railway was still tedious, though the fatigue it involved was trifling beside that experienced in the old days of the coach journeys to Kimberley. Delay, too, was experienced in the conveyance of the supplies poured out from Europe for consumption in the new centre of industry, flooded rivers in the summer and want of grass in the winter proving themselves occasionally formidable obstacles. In spite of all these drawbacks, however, the foreign community in Johannesburg lived continually in hope. The extension of the railway to their doors would make living less costly and more comfortable; the prosecution of solid mining work would rapidly lead to an increase in the monthly output. The hotels were always full; the bars and canteens did a roaring trade. Naturally the new population that had flocked to the new city included a very considerable proportion of men and women who could very well have been spared. That was inevitable. The population, moreover, was not like the old mining population of Kimberley. There was nothing in the Witwatersrand goldfields to attract the speculative efforts of the individual digger. It was from the first all "reef" mining; there was no alluvial

into which the typical digger could thrust his pick in the expectation of at least earning his day's expenses. Men of the mining class, not a few of them from Cornwall, hired out their services to the several companies, while men of a lower class lived on their wits and enriched the canteens. The miners were perfectly content with their position. They earned good wages ; they lived cheaply ; they could save money. The Government never troubled them, and they never troubled the Government. The class of men and the circumstances that have brought about revolutions and revolts in other mining countries—in Australia, for example, or even at the diamond-fields at Kimberley—were conspicuous by their absence. Nor had the wealthier classes in the new community anything to complain of. The general terms of the mining law of the country were from the first essentially liberal, and the Government showed no indisposition to amend the law at points where it might be defective. So far from being careless as to the well-being of the newly arrived population, the Government, during an exceptionally dry season towards the close of the year 1889, had put itself to considerable trouble to encourage the speedy arrival of the supplies needed to replenish diminishing stocks. If, indeed, any of the foreign community suffered at that time, it was not through any blunder or neglect on the part of the Government, but through the act of merchants, themselves in the position of foreigners, in combining to force up prices. If there was any danger of disturbance or disorder, it came from the lower stratum of the foreign population—a class of men without much regard for law or order of any kind, but who were therefore all the more likely, if

occasion arose, to seek to indulge their wish for a little excitement by making a parade of their foreign nationality and, as by consequence, their contempt for the Government under which they were living.

An opportunity for a display of this kind arose early in 1890. President Kruger, in response to an invitation conveyed to him from leading residents to pay a visit to Johannesburg, made a halt there for a night on his way from Pretoria to a point near the Cape Colony border, known as Fourteen Streams, where he had arranged to hold a conference with the newly arrived High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch. The reception Mr. Kruger met with was no doubt hearty, and intended to be hearty, but perhaps a little puzzling to one who, in spite of his natural inclination to put a good-natured interpretation on what passed, was unused to the ways of a rough English crowd and unacquainted with the language in which that crowd expressed itself. It was, no doubt, a little difficult for him to understand that the inclination to break out into the singing of "God Save the Queen" was really intended, by a crowd unacquainted with the national song of the South African Republic, as a compliment to himself. All this nevertheless passed by well enough, and Mr. Kruger, when he addressed himself to the throng, found himself loudly cheered by men the vast majority of whom could not understand a word he was saying. Later in the day, however, owing probably to the influence of copious alcoholic refreshment, a portion of the crowd became somewhat riotously disposed, and about dusk it was reported that the Transvaal flag, flying on the staff in front of the magistrate's office, had been pulled down. Whether it was hauled down by unruly spirits in

the crowd, whether it was cut down, or whether it was lowered by the police through fear of its being insulted, was never fully made plain. At any rate, it disappeared from the staff and was torn up by the crowd, the fragments being preserved as relics of what doubtless many of them regarded as "a good lark." The incident, however, had its very serious side. When the news spread through the country districts the indignation excited among the Transvaal burghers was deep and real. They had watched the influx of foreigners with no small uneasiness, and the incident seemed to wear the appearance of a deliberate attack on the independence of their country. Angry protests poured in to Mr. Kruger from all sides, and it was with no small difficulty that he persuaded the burghers that it was not necessary for them to march upon Johannesburg. The tension was considerably relieved by the conduct of all the more respectable classes in Johannesburg in repudiating the act and condemning its perpetrators, whoever they might be. Mr. Kruger's determined effort to minimise the occurrence proved successful. On his return to Pretoria a few weeks later he good-humouredly attributed the incident to the influence of the "long drinks" in which dwellers in Johannesburg were accustomed to indulge—a theory which had no doubt a very large amount of truth at the bottom of it.

This incident is specially worth alluding to, not only because it illustrated the spirit in which the Transvaal Government was ready to deal with a somewhat excitable foreign population, but also because the magnanimous way in which it was overlooked was remarkably ill-rewarded. The action of the Volksraad, which met shortly afterwards, con-

firmed and echoed the action of the President. The programme of legislation laid before the Raad by the President included three distinct and most important measures in the interest of the foreign population. These measures were (1) amendments in the Gold Law, to meet the views of those connected with the mining industry, (2) sanction for the construction of railways, and (3) the amendment of the constitution in such a way as to give the new population a voice in the legislation of the Republic. All these proposals were agreed to by the Volksraad. The resolution regarding railways was carried by acclamation. The amendments effected in the Gold Law were so satisfactory that the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg passed resolutions warmly thanking the Government and the Volksraad for what had been done. The construction of railways, it will be understood, had special reference to cheapening the cost of land-carriage on imported goods and mining machinery ; and it is worth mentioning that, warned by the experience of the preceding winter and with a view to defeat any commercial combination to keep up famine prices, the Government took the step of purchasing cargoes of Australian flour in advance. The goodwill of the Government towards the general population of Johannesburg was thus manifested, while its desire to advance the interests of the mining industry was made evident by the amendments in the Gold Law.

The proposals for the amendment of the constitution require a little fuller consideration. Originally, before the annexation in 1877, the laws of the Transvaal were as liberal with regard to the admission of foreigners to political privileges as the laws of the Orange Free State are to-day. It cannot

cause surprise that the annexation produced a feeling in favour of greater caution, and that the period of residence required before an alien could become naturalised was extended to five years. That provision was in force when the London Convention was signed in 1884, passed unquestioned by the British Government, and was still in force in 1890. The aim of Mr. Kruger in 1890 was to reduce once more the period of residence required for naturalisation. In proposing this, however, he had a very strong Conservative party in the Volksraad to deal with, and was compelled to make concessions to their prejudices in order to carry any reform. Originally the Volksraad consisted of forty-eight members, sitting in a single Chamber. Mr. Kruger's proposal was to divide this single Chamber into two Chambers of twenty-four members each, the First Volksraad retaining its supreme powers, while the Second Volksraad would be competent to legislate in matters more nearly affecting the interests of the new industrial population, subject always to the veto of the First Volksraad. As regards the election of the Second Volksraad, two years' residence was all that was necessary, subject, of course, to the ordinary process of naturalisation. This proposal was possibly open to criticism. Possibly it might be condemned as clumsy. But, having regard to all the existing circumstances and the intentions of the Government, it was expressive of an honest and sincere desire to study the interests of the new industrial population and to admit its right to take a practical concern in the legislation of the country. Mr. Kruger's ideas on the subject were very clear, and are worth while quoting, as he himself expressed them. "I intend this Second Volksraad," he said, "to act as a bridge.

I want my burghers to see that the new population may safely be trusted to take part in the government of the country. When they see that this is done, and that no harm happens, then the two Volksraads can become one again, and the distinction between the old and the new population can be obliterated."

It seems impossible to question the honesty, the liberality, and the common sense of this view. As a result of Mr. Kruger's persuasions and explanations, this measure also was accepted by the Volksraad, though not without some opposition, the more conservative members referring to the flag incident as justifying a suspicion as to the intentions of the new population. This objection, however, the President warmly combated, urging that the many orderly people in Johannesburg ought not to suffer for the error of the disorderly few. The amendment in the constitution was agreed to, and was regarded, together with the railway resolutions and the amendment of the Gold Law, as expressing the sincere desire of the old population of the Republic to be just to the new, and promising well for the future happiness and progress of the country.

And then came the reward.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHARTER AT WORK.

WHEN the Transvaal Volksraad met for its annual session on the first Monday in May, 1890, there was hardly a cloud in the political atmosphere. The uneasiness caused by the flag incident at Johannesburg had, thanks to Mr. Kruger's good sense and moderation, passed by. The relations of the Republic with every other Government, and particularly with the British Government, were of the most cordial nature. The new High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, had had a conference with President Kruger, in March, at Fourteen Streams, and the President had returned to Pretoria from that conference without the faintest suspicion that there was any misunderstanding between the South African Republic and the British Government. So far from this, indeed, he was left under the impression that the question of the destination of Swazieland, which had been engaging the attention of the Transvaal Government for some time past, was to be dealt with in a manner agreeable to his wishes and—as came to be known afterwards—in accordance with the report of a special British Commissioner who had visited Swazieland a short time before.

Under these impressions the Volksraad met and proceeded to deal with the progressive proposals laid before it in a liberal and appreciative spirit. It was, therefore, with no small surprise that residents in the Transvaal capital became aware of the circulation of rumours to the effect that a serious difference had arisen between the British Government, represented by the High Commissioner, and the Transvaal Government, and that demands had been made on the latter by the former in a spirit that gave them almost the force of an ultimatum. It caused greater surprise when it was understood that these demands were associated with proposals for the settlement of the Swazieland question, with regard to which it had been believed that a substantial agreement had been arrived at.

In order to appreciate the position it is necessary to keep in mind what had just been passing in Capetown. When President Kruger went down to Fourteen Streams in March, 1890, to meet the High Commissioner, he found that the High Commissioner was accompanied by Mr. Rhodes, who was not then holding any official position in the Cape Colony. Those who looked on did not precisely understand why Mr. Rhodes, who was known as the Managing Director of the Chartered Company, should accompany the High Commissioner to the conference with President Kruger. It was not understood that any question relating to the Chartered Company was to be discussed, nor was any allusion made to any such question after Mr. Kruger returned to Pretoria. When, however, the Cape Parliament met at its usual date, it became apparent that arrangements were in contemplation by virtue of which Mr. Rhodes would be able to immensely increase his influence.

His enterprise in organising the Chartered Company had been warmly approved by the Cape Ministry then in office, chiefly, no doubt, on the ground that it seemed to promise, or was made to seem to promise, great commercial advantages to the Cape Colony. In the course of a speech made some months before at Kimberley, Sir Gordon Sprigg, who was still Premier, had alluded to Mr. Rhodes in terms of extravagant eulogy, little dreaming of the reward which his admiration was to reap. When Parliament met in Capetown Sir Gordon Sprigg submitted an extensive scheme for railway construction within the Colony, involving a capital sum of not less than seven millions sterling. It seems probable that, in the following of the mischievous tradition established by the first Molteno Ministry fifteen years before, this proposal for wholesale expenditure on internal lines of railway had a good deal to do with a desire to secure political support from the districts to be benefited. The proposals, however, were no sooner submitted for discussion than they were violently attacked from all sides of the House—by the Opposition and no less by the Bond party, which had up to then supported the Sprigg Ministry. In a word, the Ministry was severely defeated and compelled to resign. The question then arose as to who should be entrusted with the formation of a new Ministry. The recognised leader of the Opposition—Mr. Sauer—had an interview with the Governor, but found that he would be unable, as the head of a Ministry, to command the support of the Bond. The difficulties that arose, and that had without doubt been prepared beforehand, seemed to indicate that no head of a new Ministry was possible but Mr.

Rhodes. The grooves by which he was to slide into office had doubtless been well greased beforehand. The members of the Bond were prepared to support him in return for favours received, while the liberal distribution of Chartered Company's shares among the parliamentary flock had encouraged the prevalence of that soporific spirit under the influence of which men do not trouble themselves much about abstract principles. A Rhodes Ministry was formed without difficulty, the terms for their support claimed by Bond representatives including the privilege of untaxed brandy and the converse privilege of taxed necessities, such as bread and meat, together with, if possible, sterner regulations for native labour and the securing of special fiscal privileges from the Imperial Government for Cape wines.

Up the steps of this unjust and reactionary platform Mr. Rhodes ascended to a position which made him, for the time being, a South African dictator. It is curiously illustrative of the glamour pervading the situation that so able and independent a man as Mr. Rose-Innes, jun., should have consented to become a member of the new Ministry, with the office of Attorney-General. Mr. Rose-Innes, who had a large practice at the Cape Bar, could not plead, as some Capetown politicians might have done, the necessity for securing an official salary. However, the Ministry was formed, and it is easy to realise the immense power that was thus placed in the hands of Mr. Rhodes. The influence which Mr. Rhodes possessed with official and financial circles in England had been displayed by his success in obtaining the charter for the British South Africa Company. That there was included

in the understanding that led to the granting of the charter an undertaking on the part of Mr. Rhodes to bring about a "financial reconquest" of the Transvaal, there can be little doubt. Sir Henry Loch was appointed High Commissioner because he would be prepared to work in with this view.¹ These conditions by themselves greatly increased the influence which Mr. Rhodes might be able to exercise over South African affairs. When he became Premier of the Cape Colony, however, his influence became almost absolutely supreme. The High Commissioner at Capetown, being one and the same person as the Governor of the Cape Colony, is of necessity largely bound, in respect even of matters outside the Colony, by the views of his responsible Ministers. It would be impossible for him to divide himself against himself—to follow one line of policy in his capacity as Governor, and another line in his capacity as High Commissioner. This, it may be said, is an arrangement that under ordinary circumstances works well enough, for it provides that a High Commissioner will always be constitutionally obliged to take into consideration Colonial opinion. It is quite a different matter when there is a Premier who is desirous of carrying out some special policy of his own, and who may use his influence as Premier to secure, from the High Commissioner, Imperial sanction for that policy. This was what happened when Mr. Rhodes formed his Ministry. Already the Imperial Government and the new High Commissioner were anxious to

¹ A story is current in South Africa, without, however, sufficient direct foundation to make it safely acceptable, that Sir Henry Loch made it a condition of his appointment that he should be able to command, at short notice, the services of a certain number of additional regiments from England.

further his views. When he became Premier, and presumably represented public opinion in the Cape Colony, there was almost an absolute obligation laid on the Imperial Government to follow his lead. For, just as the Imperial Government had bowed to the constitutionally expressed opinion of the Cape Colony in withdrawing the Warren expedition, so it could not venture to quarrel with the constitutionally expressed opinion of the Cape Colony when it seemed to lean in some other direction. Mr. Rhodes had Colonial opinion by the neck, and intended to make use of it, and it was impossible for a Colonial Secretary in England to understand that the man who occupied the position of Premier in a Colony possessing responsible government did not really express and convey the opinions of the majority.

The very first use made by Mr. Rhodes of the position of influence to which he had ascended was to present, through the High Commissioner, what was practically an ultimatum to the South African Republic. That ultimatum was presented in the shape of a document which bore, most inappropriately, the title of the Swazieland Convention. It has to be borne in mind that, according to the report of a special British Commissioner—Sir Francis de Winton—who had visited Swazieland shortly before the date now referred to, the best and most logical thing that could be done with Swazieland would be to place it under the control of the Transvaal Government, in accordance with the wishes of that Government. The report had been withheld from publication, but its substance was doubtless before the Colonial Office when the proposals of 1890 were made. On the merits of the

case, therefore, and in the interest of peace and order in a native territory which was being considerably disturbed by the intrusion of a speculative European population, the settlement of the Swazieland question in the sense desired by the Transvaal Government would have been just and right. That, however, was not the view taken by the High Commissioner, as representing the Imperial Government, at the instance of Mr. Rhodes. The convention sent up to Pretoria to be at once accepted and ratified by the Transvaal Government and Volksraad, while it demanded substantial concessions from the Republic, offered absolutely nothing in return, save a guarantee for the indefinite prolongation of the Swazieland controversy. In the first place it demanded an absolute renunciation by the Transvaal of that outlook to the north which had been left to it under the London Convention. By the terms of that convention, while the Transvaal Government was forbidden to conclude treaties with native chiefs to the east and west of the Republic, except with the sanction of the British Government, the north was left open for further expansion of its influence, if the Republic so desired it. Nothing had happened to give any moral justification for the demand now made. Nothing had disturbed the cordiality of the relations between Great Britain and the Transvaal. No ; the demand was made partly to give the Chartered Company increased security in Mashonaland, to which the concession obtained from the Matabele chief did not legally apply, and partly in the following of a pious desire to "put a ring-fence" round the Dutch Republics in South Africa. The other demand made by the ultimatum was that the Transvaal should forthwith enter into the Customs

Union already existing between the Cape Colony and the Free State. If the convention was not signed and ratified by a certain date, only a few weeks distant, the right of the Transvaal to any recognition of its claims in Swazieland would be abrogated, and a British force, steps for the formation of which were being taken in Natal, would be sent up to seize and occupy that country.

It can well be understood that such demands as these were received in the Transvaal capital with surprise and indignation. The relations between the Republic and the British Government had been, up to that moment, of the most friendly kind, and the Government and the Volksraad had just given the sincerest possible proofs of their desire to consider the interests and feelings of the new population. It is right to say that, by the Transvaal Executive, such unfriendly and oppressive action was not attributed to the direct influence or wish of the British Imperial Government. As if to confirm them in this view, they experienced almost at the very same time the gratification of seeing the Vice-President of the Republic, who had been one of the leading military commanders in the war of independence, accorded a most cordial reception by all classes in Natal, including the officers of the garrison. It was clear that a new influence was at work, and it may be accepted that from that moment Mr. Rhodes was recognised as the intriguing and implacable enemy of the South African Republic. Peculiar bitterness was aroused by the mixing up of matters of Imperial policy with the purely local question of a Customs Union. The object of importing that question into the convention was doubtless twofold. It was hoped to compel

the Transvaal to admit Cape wines and brandy duty free, and it was also hoped to aim a blow at the commercial competition of Natal by hampering the trade of that Colony with the Transvaal. The provisions of the Convention referring to the surrender by the Transvaal of all hope of extending its influence towards the north were framed with the view of satisfying those interested in the prospects of the Chartered Company. The provisions relating to the Customs Union were framed with the view of satisfying Mr. Rhodes' supporters in the Cape Colony. In both cases the provisions were unjust and oppressive, and far removed indeed from the treatment due to the South African Republic from a professedly friendly State.

The indignation caused by the terms of the proposed convention was so deep that there was every prospect of its being rejected, no matter at what cost. A proposal was made that, as General Joubert was just about to visit Europe, he should be empowered to discuss the matter with the Secretary of State in London. The suggestion, however, was peremptorily declined, and the Transvaal Government was left with the alternatives of accepting, under strong pressure, an unjust convention, or incurring the risk of a war with Great Britain. It was a cruel dilemma. In the midst of the hesitation and agitation which prevailed, it was reported that Mr. Hofmeyr was proceeding from Capetown to Pretoria for the purpose of using his influence to persuade the Volksraad to accept the terms of the convention, in the hope of avoiding an actual breach of friendship with the High Commissioner and the British Government. The real reasons for Mr. Hofmeyr's appearance on the scene at

this juncture have never been sufficiently explained. Those who hold that he was influenced by a sincere desire to assist his Dutch kinsfolk in Pretoria out of a somewhat awkward dilemma, seem to forget that, as Leader of the Dutch party in the Cape Parliament, Mr. Hofmeyr had always had within his reach a most effectual means for compelling Mr. Rhodes' Ministry to consult as much as possible the feelings and wishes of the Transvaal burghers. Mr. Rhodes, as Premier, would have been bound to pay attention to the wishes of the Bond party, if those wishes had found an opportunity of expressing themselves, and the High Commissioner would have been bound to pay attention to the representations of Mr. Rhodes. As Mr. Hofmeyr had failed, in spite of his great influence, to put a check, through the Cape Parliament, upon Mr. Rhodes' hostile policy towards the Transvaal, it did not seem that his appearance in Pretoria in the character of mediator between the High Commissioner and the Transvaal people and Volksraad could be associated with any great sincerity of purpose on their behalf. It seems not improbable that Mr. Hofmeyr's real mission was to find out exactly how much the Transvaal Government and Volksraad would assent to, so that whatever in the convention was too strong for the feelings of Transvaal burghers might be expunged from it or held in suspense. This impression seems to be confirmed by the fact that when, after prolonged discussions in the Raad, the convention was ratified, the articles providing for the inclusion of the Transvaal in a Customs Union were held indefinitely in suspense. There is, it may be said, no great reason to believe that Mr. Hofmeyr was really animated with any great goodwill towards

the Transvaal. In the first place the Transvaal had deeply offended the Cape wine-growers by declining to become a party to the Customs Union, and it had given further offence by declining to admit the right of Cape colonists to claim the best appointments in the Transvaal Civil Service. The claim was founded on the assistance given—negative assistance, if nothing more—from Capetown to the Transvaal burghers when they were struggling for their independence. The claim was unreasonable, and would never have been preferred unless it had been seen plainly that, under the new conditions in the Transvaal, Civil Service appointments would be likely to be worth having. That the Transvaal Government bore no kind of ill-will towards the Cape Colony was proved by the fact that numbers of Cape colonists were, and are still, to be found holding official positions in the South African Republic. That, however, is quite a different thing from consenting to see Capetown influences installed in the highest Executive offices. There can be no doubt that the people of the Cape Colony had assisted the struggling burghers by their sympathy and occasionally by something more. They had not, however, rendered nearly such hearty and active assistance as had been rendered by the burghers of the Free State who, with deeper appreciation of the whole situation, neither claimed posts under the Transvaal Government nor envied those who held them.

On the understanding that the articles referring to the inclusion of the Transvaal in the Customs Union were to be held in suspense, the Swazieland Convention was signed and ratified. It in no sense settled the Swazieland question, or came up to the promises

for the settlement of that question which had been made to President Kruger at the conference at Fourteen Streams. But it at least kept alive the claim of the South African Republic to be considered in respect of that settlement, whenever it took place, and avoided a crisis which might have resulted in wholesale bloodshed throughout South Africa. There can be little doubt that, in urging the Volksraad to ratify the convention, Mr. Kruger was influenced to a considerable extent by the probability that, by the time the three years during which the convention was to be in force came to an end, a Liberal Ministry would be again in office in England, with whom the whole matter might be rediscussed on a more favourable basis. The convention was ratified, but the impression made by the conditions it imposed and the circumstances under it was forced upon the Transvaal, was deep and lasting. It was all the more deep and lasting, because it was clear to the mind of every Transvaal burgher that it was not the British Imperial Government that was thus acting, but Mr. Rhodes, who had somehow managed to induce that Government to give him command of the South African ship. The British Government, if not perhaps so cordial towards the South African Republic as it might be, was at any rate not its enemy. That Mr. Rhodes was the enemy of the Republic was plain, and it became from that day forth evident that to keep careful watch on the actions of Mr. Rhodes was one of the first duties of those who were entrusted with the administration of public affairs in Pretoria.

The later months of 1890—a year which had begun with so much promise—were as commercially disastrous as the progress of political events had

been discouraging. The reckless speculation in gold-mining shares had so far affected the stability of general commercial arrangements that two South African banks—the Cape of Good Hope Bank and the Union Bank of Cape Town—were compelled to suspend payment. The failure of the latter was felt with terrible severity in Capetown, where wealthy shareholders found themselves suddenly reduced to poverty in their efforts to meet the calls resulting from the principle of unlimited liability on which the institution was based. The failure of the Cape of Good Hope Bank, however, which had branches all over South Africa, was felt more widely, and produced for a brief period something almost like a panic. It was under these conditions that the Government of Natal, acting with most praiseworthy public spirit, came to the support of the Natal Bank, an institution possessing very important branches in the Transvaal, where it carried on a large business. The panic was stayed, but the depression caused by this financial disturbance was very widely felt, and for the time seriously affected the prospects of the gold industry. Everything drooped. The tightness of money stood in the way of the vigorous prosecution of mining operations, and this in its turn affected both the monthly output and market values. The “boom” which was prophesied refused to come, and there were not wanting those who declared that Johannesburg was already on the down-grade.

The advance of the Chartered Company into Mashonaland was meanwhile not progressing very happily. There was no opposition from natives, and indeed none was expected, the operations of the Company being as yet quite outside the limits of

Matabeleland proper. Fortified posts had been established and gold reefs had been sought for, but it could not be said that the Land of Promise had in any substantial respect become a land of performance. Meantime the right of the Chartered Company to absorb and appropriate the whole of the "hinterland" of South Africa was being very seriously questioned in all parts of the South African Continent. During the early months of 1891 reports were circulated of an intention on the part of a large number of farmers and others in the Transvaal, in the Free State, and in the Cape Colony, to "trek" beyond the Limpopo—the river forming the northern boundary of the Transvaal—as soon as the dry season set in, ignoring the rights claimed by the Chartered Company under its concession from Lo Bengula. This "trek" was based on a concession obtained by one Adendorff from an independent chief in Mashonaland, who claimed to be entirely independent of Lo Bengula. It was alleged that the Chartered Company, in taking possession of Mashonaland, was going entirely beyond the limits of the concession on which the charter was based, and that it had no more right there than any other party which might "trek" into the country, and considerably less right than the holders of the Adendorff concession. As the summer months drew to a close, numbers of families, starting with their wagons from all parts of South Africa, began to make their way through the Transvaal towards the main drift across the Limpopo River. There can be no question that they carried with them the warm sympathy of the whole Dutch population of South Africa, including the Bond party in the Cape Colony, which was then committed to the mainte-

nance of Mr. Rhodes in office. The moment was a very critical one for Mr. Rhodes and his Company. If the "trek" went forward, the speculative ends which the possession of Mashonaland was intended to serve would be frustrated, while if the Bond party in the Cape Colony approved the "trek," his own power and influence as Premier would be gone. The Imperial Government would not venture to back up an enterprise which the majority of the Cape Parliament practically condemned. In this dilemma Mr. Rhodes had recourse to the expedient of dividing the Bond party against itself. By means of arguments calculated to show that the agricultural population in the Cape Colony would reap immense benefits from the enterprise of the Chartered Company, he persuaded a very considerable section of the Bond that the proposed "trek" into Mashonaland was a thing to be frustrated. Once sure in this way of a majority in the Cape Parliament, Mr. Rhodes was in a position to make use of the authority of the High Commissioner, as representing the British Imperial Government, for the purpose of putting an end to the "trek." Although the "trek" was being recruited from every part of South Africa, including the Cape Colony itself, the Transvaal Government was informed that it would be held responsible for any attempt to cross the Limpopo, the warning being backed up by threats of an unmistakable kind. For the sake of the preservation of peace, the Transvaal Government issued a proclamation warning all and sundry against crossing the Limpopo into Mashonaland. To use the expression current at the time, Mr. Kruger "damped the trek." The convictions of the "trekkers" were in no respect changed, and their

resentment towards the usurpation, as they regarded it, of the Chartered Company in nowise diminished. Nevertheless, out of consideration for the difficulties of the Transvaal Government, they abandoned their intentions. A small party, consisting largely of men from the Free State, went forward as far as the Limpopo drift with the object of testing the question. They made no attempt to cross on finding that any such attempt would be forcibly resisted, and returned to their homes, the only adventure they met with being the narrow escape of one of the most influential of their number—a Mr. Van Soelen, from Ladybrand, in the Free State—from being shot, while bathing in the river, by the accidental discharge of a Maxim by the Chartered Company's police.^{*} The whole circumstances, however, produced a most bitter feeling between Pretoria and Capetown, the Bond party in the Colonial metropolis being accused of betraying their Dutch kinsfolk in the Transvaal into the hands of the Chartered Company and the British Government. So little, in fact, had Mr. Rhodes succeeded in any scheme to make English and Dutch work together, that he had exasperated Dutch against English and divided Dutch against each other.

The year 1891 was remarkable for another incident marking the endeavours of the Chartered Company to enlarge its borders in the interior. Its quarrel with the Portuguese authorities, which led to the

^{*} It was reported at the time that this party of "trekkers" was under the direction of a certain Colonel Ferreira, whose name has recently been heard of in connection with attempts at claim-jumping at Johannesburg. This, however, is a mistake. Ferreira was in no sense trusted by the "trekkers," and, judging by subsequent events, it seems most likely that he was secretly in the pay of the Chartered Company. See the references in Major Lennard's book—"How we made Rhodesia."

action at Massi-Kessi, does not properly fall within the scope of an historical sketch of events in South Africa. Nevertheless, intimately connected with this quarrel an event occurred which has a real South African interest. Controlling a considerable territory near Delagoa Bay there is to be found an important native chief, by name Gungunhana, who holds a paramount position over sundry smaller chiefs in the same district. If Gungunhana, a vassal of the Portuguese, could only be induced to give trouble to the Portuguese Government, it might serve the purposes of the Chartered Company by making a diversion. A small steamer named the *Countess of Carnarvon*, the property of the Chartered Company,¹ left Port Elizabeth mysteriously and illegally—that is, without a clearance. Her destination and the object of her mission were naturally matters of some considerable curiosity. The next thing heard of her was that she had been captured by a Portuguese gunboat off the mouth of the Limpopo River, a short distance north of Delagoa Bay. She had been captured as she emerged from the Limpopo River, where she had been for the purpose of communicating with Gungunhana, and had, it was believed at the time, supplied him with guns. The indignation expressed throughout South Africa at this adventure was very great, and the more so because the Cape Colony was made to appear as a party to an illegal and possibly piratical adventure to the detriment of a foreign Government. That Cape Colony officials, responsible to Mr. Rhodes as Premier, were mixed up with the affair, there can be little doubt, while the manner in which it was

¹ The sum received for the sale of this steamer appears in the Chartered Company's accounts for 1894.

regarded was sufficiently indicated by the expression by the leading Dutch newspaper in Capetown of a pious wish that the commander of the offending vessel had had his head taken off by a Portuguese cannon-ball. The Cape Parliament, however, did not trouble itself about the matter. It was content to believe that what the Chartered Company did was well. It did, it is true, endeavour to investigate the exact reasons why a certain Mr. Denis Doyle, who had been in charge of the *Countess of Carnarvon*, was forthwith pitchforked into a position in the Cape Civil Service, for which he had never applied, against all the rules of the Service, and at a salary considerably higher than that which had been advertised in an official invitation for candidates. The member of the Cape House of Assembly, however, who had taken the matter up, did not proceed with it beyond the stage of obtaining from the Government a promise to produce all papers bearing on the subject. That he was in some way converted to a more complaisant state of mind seems suggested by his action at a public meeting in Capetown in December, 1896, when he moved a resolution urging that Mr. Rhodes should be invited to resume office as Premier. South Africa is a land of conversions as well as surprises.

CHAPTER XIV.

ABOUT RAILWAYS.

ALTHOUGH the guiding maxim of Mr. Rhodes' policy with regard to the Transvaal was repression and antagonism, there were nevertheless certain matters in respect of which a more friendly policy was almost an absolute necessity for the commercial interests of the Cape Colony. The two South African Colonies, and perhaps the Cape Colony more particularly, had by this time come to the conclusion that they were destined to live upon the gold industry at Johannesburg, just as once they had lived upon the diamond industry at Kimberley. Johannesburg, indeed, had sprung into existence in the very nick of time, just when the future prospects of Kimberley became overclouded. The Cape Colony had perhaps more reason than Natal to be anxious on the subject. Natal had, for the time being, gained immensely by keeping outside the Customs Union, and it was clear that the geographical position of the smaller and younger Colony was calculated to give it an immense advantage over the older. The Cape Colony was still conveying goods for Johannesburg by way of Kimberley or Vryburg, which had become the centre of administration in Bechuanaland. This

involved a railway journey of over 480 miles to Kimberley, or over 600 miles to Vryburg from the nearest Cape port (Port Elizabeth), with a wagon journey of considerably more than 200 miles beyond either station. In Natal the distance from the port to the then railway terminus at Newcastle was only 270 miles, with a wagon journey to Johannesburg of perhaps 170 miles more. So, long, then, as the two Colonies were alike dependent on an unfinished railway system and a wagon journey beyond the railway terminus, Natal could be sure of securing the great bulk of the Johannesburg trade. The same thing would probably happen if the whole distance by both routes were covered by a railway. In the meantime, however, while Natal had as yet failed to secure the assent of the Transvaal Government for a railway extension to Johannesburg from the Natal frontier, the Cape Colony had entered into arrangements with the Free State for railway construction in that State which seemed to give the Cape Government the hope of being able to reach Johannesburg by a shorter route than that round by Kimberley or Vryburg.

The assent given by the Transvaal Volksraad to the construction of railways in 1890 had not any universal application. Apart from the railway to connect Pretoria with Delagoa Bay, which was then making slow progress through a difficult country, the assent of the Raad applied (1) to a railway between Pretoria and Johannesburg, and (2) to a railway from Johannesburg, or its neighbourhood, to the southern frontier of the Republic on the Vaal River, where it might be one day expected to meet the extension of the Cape Colony line through the Free State. It became the interest of the Cape

Colony to effect this junction at the earliest possible date, and thus to divert from the Natal route the bulk of the Johannesburg trade. To this end an agreement with the Transvaal Government was necessary. It might have been thought that, after what had passed in connection with the Swazieland Convention in 1890 and the "trek" question in 1891, the Cape Government would be very unwilling to ask, and the Transvaal Government equally unwilling to grant, any kind of commercial concession. It was, however, held in Capetown that though the Transvaal Executive might entertain no very friendly feelings towards Mr. Rhodes, it might not be impervious to the persuasions of a more acceptable member of the Cape Ministry. It was resolved, therefore, to send to Pretoria Sir James Sivewright, who then held the office of Commissioner of Works in Mr. Rhodes' Ministry, in the hope that he might be able to arrive at some workable agreement. It was in Sir James Sivewright's favour that he had already made himself personally acceptable to President Kruger, and could converse with him in his own language, and that further, being a Scotchman, he shared with the rest of his countrymen a special ability to place himself on cordial terms with the class of Dutchmen whom Mr. Kruger represents. Sir James Sivewright arrived in Pretoria at the end of November, 1891, and succeeded so well in his mission that in a few days he returned to Capetown with a working arrangement, under which the Cape Government and the Transvaal railway authorities—the managers of the Netherlands South African Railway Company—agreed mutually to assist each other in establishing railway communication between Johannesburg and the Cape railway system at the

earliest possible date. The agreement was to hold good for the limited period of three years, the Cape Government practically making itself responsible for the raising of the necessary capital.

The way being thus cleared, it became the interest and the duty of the Cape Government to make the utmost of the opportunity afforded to it. Here again it fell to Sir James Sivewright, who had negotiated the agreement, to see that full effect was given to it, and there can be no question that the manner in which the business was taken in hand was in the highest degree creditable to Sir James Sivewright and, through him, to the Ministry of which he was a member. Having in former years filled the post of Superintendent of Telegraphs to the Cape Government, and having in this capacity done an immense amount of work in extending telegraph lines through South Africa, Sir James Sivewright was peculiarly qualified to push forward the new work of railway construction. The Cape railway system had before then reached Bloemfontein, the Free State capital; it remained to extend it as rapidly as possible over the two hundred and odd miles between Bloemfontein and the Transvaal frontier. By virtue of a convention between the Cape Colony and the Free State, the accomplishment of this work fell to the share of the Cape Government, which, under the direction of Sir James Sivewright, took it in hand with the utmost vigour. The country to be traversed was not, on the whole, difficult. A large portion of the Free State consists of a fairly level tableland, with, however, considerable undulations on its surface and intersected here and there by rivers running between high banks and subject to heavy summer floods.

By making use of temporary bridges across these rivers—bridges that served for a few months while the permanent bridges were constructing—a line capable of carrying the through traffic to Johannesburg was opened up in the brief space of eight months, the construction of the line in the Transvaal, on the other side of the Vaal River, being hurried on to meet it, while the completion of the line between Johannesburg and Pretoria proceeded at an almost equally rapid rate. As a result of these efforts, through railway communication between the leading Transvaal towns and the Cape Colony, which in 1890, when the Transvaal Volksraad passed the resolutions in favour of railway construction, was looked forward to as a possibility of the next four or five years, was actually at work in a little over two years. The enterprise shown by the Cape Government, thanks to Sir James Sivewright, was admirable, and the Cape Colony benefited from it as well as the gold industry. What was accomplished was the result of honest hard work, to which even those whose interests suffered from it—the colonists of Natal—could not raise the smallest objection. The extent to which the Cape Colony profited and Natal suffered may be gathered from the fact that whereas in 1891 the value of imports into Natal had reached four millions, in 1893 it had fallen to two millions, the loss of 50 per cent. going to swell the imports into Cape Colony ports. The honest and vigorous enterprise shown by the Cape Colony over this railway extension is all the more noteworthy because it furnishes an instance of success achieved apart from any condescension to that policy of intrigue which has unhappily distinguished the action of Cape Ministries in so many of

their endeavours to get the better of their South African neighbours.

It may be appropriate here to say a few words with regard to the relations between the various South African railway systems, especially as some disputes of quite recent times—disputes which are very little understood outside South Africa—turn entirely upon railway questions. The point of first importance to be kept in mind is that all the South African railway systems—the Cape system, the Natal system, the system of the railways in the Transvaal—have been constructed with the view of meeting the demands of the gold industry at Johannesburg, and that all live upon it. In the Cape Colony and in Natal, but in the Cape Colony especially, the main sources of revenue are (1) Customs duties levied on goods in transit to Johannesburg and (2) railway charges on goods conveyed to Johannesburg. It is in view of the revenue to be gained from these sources that the two Colonies have undertaken the heavy financial responsibilities involved in the construction of trunk lines of railway, and the profits derived from those trunk lines of railway form the most important financial support to each Colony's credit. Apart from the Johannesburg traffic, no railway in South Africa would pay much more than its working expenses, and the profits on that traffic make up, and more than make up, for the absence of profit on lines which are supposed to serve the interests of agricultural development. This has been more than once a matter of complaint in Johannesburg, where consumers fail to see why their goods should be charged unnecessarily high rates from Cape ports in order that the produce of vineyards about Capetown may be carried by rail-

way almost free of cost. It is, naturally, the through traffic over long distances that pays. How well it pays can be gathered from the results of the working of the Free State section of the route from Cape ports to the Rand. That line, owing to the nature of the country to be traversed, was an inexpensive one, the three hundred and odd miles between the Orange River and the Vaal River costing a capital sum of about two and a quarter millions sterling. Under a convention with the Free State that line was constructed and, till recently, worked by the Cape Government as part of its own system, the Free State retaining the right to take it over on payment of the original cost. By the terms of the convention referred to the Cape Government took from the profits the interest at 4 per cent. on the capital invested, the remaining profits being equally divided between the Cape and Free State Governments. In 1894 this line earned a clear profit of 18 per cent., so that the Cape Government received 11 per cent. on two and a quarter millions and the Free State Government 7 per cent.

This is a matter to which, owing to later events, subsequent allusion must be made, and it is therefore well to show beforehand the nature of the railway relationship between the Free State and the Cape Colony. All this large profit, it must be borne in mind, comes out of the Johannesburg goldfields. The Cape Government, in short, practically lives on the Johannesburg gold industry. The Colony of Natal is in just the same position, though the lower Customs tariff levied in Natal goes far to clear the situation of any imputation of injustice. When these facts are considered, it will be seen that there is absolutely no foundation for the complaints made

against the Transvaal Government of living upon the gold industry. The whole of South Africa lives upon it, and it would be absurd indeed to contend that the Transvaal Government is the only South African Government that must not reap any benefit from an industry situated in its own territory. The Transvaal Government is in exactly the same position as the other South African Governments. All it receives directly from the gold industry is what is practically a nominal charge for mining or prospecting licenses—a charge perfectly ridiculous compared with the profits earned by mines under any kind of intelligent management. Besides this source of revenue, the Transvaal Government benefits by the receipts from what is really a very moderate Customs tariff and by the profits from its own system of railways, built and worked by the Netherlands South African Railway Company. That railway company has been the object of unlimited abuse, and has been described as screwing out enormous profits from the gold industry for the enriching of shareholders in Amsterdam and Berlin. As a matter of fact, however, under the terms of the concession granted to the Company, 85 per cent. of the profits earned go to the Transvaal Government, which received in respect of the working of the lines in 1895 upwards of £320,000. It might be argued that the dimensions of the payment thus made contain a proof that the scale of charges on the Netherlands Company's lines is too high. Possibly it may be capable of reduction; but those who contend for its reduction cannot leave out of sight the heavy profits earned from the Johannesburg gold industry by the Cape Colony and Natal.

It will tend towards a better understanding of

various matters that will presently come under notice if something further is said here with regard to the general character and efficiency of the Transvaal railways, which have been made the object of so many complaints, chiefly, it must be confessed, by persons who are totally ignorant on the subject of railways in general. As compared with the Colonial railways in South Africa, the lines owned by the Transvaal Railway Company are in no sense inferior and are in some senses superior, while they are under the control of admittedly the ablest and most courteous railway administrator in South Africa. The various railway conferences that have been held during the last two or three years have made it plain that there is in South Africa no railway official who is equal to Mr. Middelberg, the managing director of Transvaal railways, as a railway expert or as a shrewd and courteous negotiator. As regards the character of the lines which he controls, it may be said that Colonial railway experts who have made acquaintance with them for the first time have been astonished at their solidity and workmanlike appearance. The line from Pretoria to the Portuguese frontier near Delagoa Bay is a masterpiece of engineering, all the most modern principles of railway-making having been invoked to carry a first-class road through a most picturesque and often difficult country. The locomotives are most serviceable, the rolling-stock uniform. What, however, has not improbably tended to create a prejudice in the minds of persons of limited experience, is that in many respects Continental rather than English tradition has been followed. As regards speed, it has to be borne in mind that nowhere in South Africa, owing to a narrow gauge— $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet—and an

undulating road, are railway speeds high. The Cape mail train, that runs once a week each way between Capetown and Johannesburg, averages a speed of little over $20\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, while the ordinary daily trains between the same points average less than 18 miles an hour. On the Natal system, where in several places the gradients are as steep as one in thirty, the fastest trains can scarcely average 18 miles an hour, while ordinary trains have to be content with 14. On the Transvaal railway system the distance between Johannesburg and Pretoria—46 miles—is punctually performed by the ordinary trains in two hours and forty minutes—an average speed of over 17 miles an hour, which seems likely, moreover, to be accelerated. So far, therefore, there is no sort of comparison to be drawn between Colonial lines and the Transvaal lines, which is unfavourable to the latter. As regards other matters, there can be no question that the railway managements of the Cape Colony and Natal compete with each other most laudably in the matter of showing civility to travellers. It is possible that in some cases railway officials in the Transvaal have fallen somewhat short of the example set on the Colonial lines. The only possible place whence the Transvaal Railway Company can supply itself with officials is Holland, the Cape Colony importing its officials very largely from Wales, while Natal chiefly imports its officials from Scotland. Hence it may very well have happened that in some cases an official's imperfect knowledge of English has led to a misunderstanding—any instance of a misunderstanding being always made the most of by journals and persons who are interested in finding fault with everything connected in any way with the Transvaal

Government. Honestly regarded, however, the railways built and worked in the South African Republic under the concession granted to the Netherlands South African Railway Company are well-built and efficient lines, and can in no respect be regarded as deserving of the complaints and censure enviously poured out against them.

These are, as it may be said, matters of detail. It is well, however, that they should be understood, as otherwise there might be a difficulty in comprehending fully the real nature and bearing of events that occurred later. There can be no doubt that the Cape Government, by pushing on its railway system through the Free State, rendered a service both to itself and to South Africa. It was a piece of honest and praiseworthy enterprise that had the effect of inspiring increased enterprise in other directions. By the construction of this Free State section of the route towards Johannesburg the Cape Government enabled itself to make use, for the purposes of the new traffic with Johannesburg, of all the lines originally intended to lead to Kimberley. For the time being the Cape Colony secured for its lines of railway very nearly the whole of the Johannesburg traffic, the Natal railway system having then barely reached the Transvaal border, while the Delagoa Bay route still seemed to be struggling with the engineering difficulties between the Portuguese frontier and the eastern edge of the great central tableland of the Republic. Indeed, the prospect of the Natal system being allowed an extension through the Transvaal seemed at this time shadowy enough. Ever since the annexation in 1877 a prejudice had been entertained in the Transvaal against Natal, and all overtures made from Natal, with the view of

being admitted to a participation in the Johannesburg trade, were for some time futile. What really finally swayed the balance in favour of Natal's commercial expectations was the part secretly played by the Cape Government in seeking to hamper the construction of the Delagoa Bay railway. The Transvaal Government became alive to the fact that, if anything happened seriously to check the progress of the Delagoa Bay line, the Cape Government might be left practically in the position of a railway monopolist, and would use that position for its own advantage to the detriment of the Republic. To avoid such a danger, it became necessary to arrange for the construction of an extension from the Natal border to Johannesburg. The agreement under which the work was to be taken in hand was concluded early in the year 1894, and less than two years afterwards the line was practically ready for traffic. In the meantime the Delagoa Bay line had also been making rapid progress, and was practically opened through from Pretoria to the Portuguese frontier in the first week of 1895.

To allude to these matters here is somewhat to anticipate the course of events. It is, however, in a measure convenient thus to anticipate, because it justifies an allusion to the different parts played by different Cape Ministries at different times. The rapid extension of the Cape railway system to Johannesburg in 1892 was a piece of honest and praiseworthy enterprise, by which the whole country was benefited. The Cape Ministry, however, that planned and carried out that enterprise, was dissolved in the latter part of 1892 owing to internal disagreements, and a new Ministry was formed under Mr. Rhodes, from which all the administrative

strength of the first Rhodes Ministry was omitted. Quitting honest enterprise, the Cape Ministry thereupon resorted to intrigue, seeking to benefit itself by maiming its commercial competitors for the Johannesburg trade. Geographically speaking, the trade of Johannesburg belongs to Delagoa Bay and Natal. The Cape Colony, however, managed for a time to absorb that trade, owing to its being in possession of through railway communication, and has succeeded in retaining a very considerable share of the trade owing to the facilities offered at its ports, and to the fact that, the trade having got into a Cape Colony groove, it could not very easily be diverted back again. Presuming on these advantages, and, it may be suspected, presuming also on a supposed willingness of the Imperial Government to support it, the Cape Government, in 1894, made a preposterous claim to a right to 50 per cent. of the whole railway receipts from Johannesburg traffic. The claim was promptly rejected by the Transvaal Government and the Transvaal Railway Company, and most properly rejected. There is, it may be said, very good reason to believe that it was made contrary to the opinion and advice of the officers responsible for the management of the Cape railway system. There can be little doubt, however, that the rejection of this claim went to swell the grudge entertained by the Cape Government against the South African Republic, and rendered the Cape Government, purely animated as it then was by the policy and wishes of Mr. Rhodes, all the more anxious to find some means of influencing railway matters in its own favour, even though the power of the Imperial Government should have to be called in to its assistance.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MATABELE WAR.

IN spite of the success achieved by the Chartered Company, backed up by the Imperial Government, in keeping independent settlers out of Mashonaland, the settlement and development of Mashonaland had not made much progress up to the end of 1892. The centre of administration, Fort Salisbury, had advanced sufficiently to justify the establishment of a species of municipal body, known as the Sanitary Board, and the starting of a regular weekly newspaper, the *Rhodesia Herald*. It would, however, be absurd to say that the country had in any respect fulfilled the anticipations that had been entertained with regard to it. True, there had as yet been no native troubles. But on the other hand there had been no marked discovery of any gold-bearing reefs. As regards the absence of native troubles, that was doubtless owing to the fact that the Mashonas, although bearing a bad character for dishonesty, were in no respect disposed to resist the power that had come among them. They were not, it is true, treated with very evenhanded justice. They were liable to the eccentric exercise of authority by officials of the Company, and to sentences from its magistrates which were strangely in contrast with

the sentences meted out to Europeans. For example, while a European would be let off with a fine of £50 for killing a native, a native was liable to be flogged if he committed some petty theft. Again, an official who was clearly in the wrong could successfully plead provocation if, as a punishment for resistance offered to his own unauthorised action, he proceeded to burn down native huts. As regards mining enterprise, there can be little doubt that the great check to it was to be found in what was known as the "50 per cent. clause" in the conditions of settlement, by virtue of which 50 per cent. of the value of every property discovered or developed by individual labour went into the coffers of the Company.

There can be no doubt that in this respect, as in other respects, the Company was placed in a somewhat difficult position. Although, owing to the forcing up of the value of the original shares to a fictitious level, speculators and other favoured persons had been able to make money, there was very little money to spend on the real necessities of the country. It was admittedly the policy of the Chartered Company to aim at putting capital into Mashonaland by floating subsidiary companies, thus drawing from the pockets of unwary investors the revenue which apparently the country itself was incapable of returning. For this reason it seemed to be necessary to maintain the right of the Chartered Company to levy the 50 per cent. impost, which, early in December, 1892, Dr. Jameson justified on the ground that without it capital could not be obtained. On the other hand, individual prospectors were slow to go to work with this 50 per cent. clause hanging over them, and lost no

opportunity of urging its abolition. A conflict of interest, moreover, was visible with regard to the natural route from Fort Salisbury to the sea. Geographically speaking, there could be no question whatever that the proper route from Fort Salisbury to the sea lay eastward, through the Portuguese settlement at Beira. On the other hand, this obvious conclusion served to create grave political discontent in the Cape Colony, especially in the neighbourhood of Capetown, whence Mr. Rhodes had chiefly obtained the support that enabled him to put an end to the Adendorff "trek." Fort Salisbury, it was clear, as well as the country around it, was quite out of the way of direct connection with Capetown. Yet, unless the Cape Colony, and Capetown especially, could be assured that the progress of the Chartered Company meant prosperity to itself, the political support on which Mr. Rhodes reckoned, and without which he would be placed at a serious disadvantage in respect of his relations with the Imperial Government, might be withdrawn. If, on the other hand, the country that began to be known as Rhodesia could be commercially linked with the Cape Colony, the support which was necessary to the maintenance of Mr. Rhodes' position as a South African dictator would be secured. It was plain to every one that, with Fort Salisbury as the capital of the new territory, the Cape Colony was commercially out of the running. Fort Salisbury could be so easily reached from Beira or from Delagoa Bay (through the Transvaal), that all talk of making Capetown the commercial outlet for Rhodesia would be absurd.

From a political point of view, therefore, it was highly disadvantageous that the Company should

confine its operations to Mashonaland. From a commercial point of view it was equally undesirable. The opinion entertained by the public as to the value of Mashonaland was indicated by the market price of Chartered Company's shares, which had fallen to a little above par. New capital was required, not only for the purposes of administration, but for the satisfying of those whose interest in the Company was chiefly speculative. It would, however, have been difficult, if not impossible, to float new capital on the enterprise as it then stood. An extension of territory, the capture of some fresh area alleged to contain gold-reefs which were presumably payable, would doubtless give the enterprise a valuable impulse, and enable its promoters to come before the public with confidence with a request for a large increase of capital. Unfortunately it was not very clear in what way the new area could be obtained. There was Matabeleland, no doubt, with its capital at Buluwayo, and no doubt Buluwayo, being nearly three hundred miles west of Fort Salisbury, would be a centre far more attractive, in a geographical sense, to Mr. Rhodes' supporters in Capetown. The difficulty was, however, to find some justification or pretext for seizing hold upon Matabeleland. It had been the policy of the Company, when taking possession of Mashonaland, to minimise as much as possible risks of native disturbance. Mr. Selous was being quoted at the end of 1892 as an authority with regard to the peaceable intentions of the Matabele chief, Lo Bengula. In the opinion of Mr. Selous there was no likelihood of war between Rhodesia and the Matabele in Lo Bengula's lifetime, unless the Matabele were driven to it. "Any organised attack on the whites," it was contended on the

authority of Mr. Selous, "was out of the question whilst Lo Bengula was at the head of affairs." About the same time it was reported from Victoria that native and tribal questions were quiet, and the *Rhodesia Herald*, the Fort Salisbury paper, referring to this report, remarked that this did not look as if Lo Bengula's subjects had "got out of hand." At the end of 1892, moreover, Captain Lendy, whose name became somewhat prominent a little later, was despatched, at Lo Bengula's request, on a diplomatic mission to Buluwayo for the purpose of assisting in identifying natives who had been implicated in certain road robberies. The independent testimony of traders, moreover, who visited Buluwayo in the early part of 1893, was to the effect that the Matabele were in a very quiet and peaceful state, and quite willing to trade with the white man. It was also stated that the great dance at Buluwayo, in celebration of the gathering in of first-fruits, had been a brilliant success, and had been attended with far less violence than in former times.

While, however, reports from Buluwayo towards the end of 1892, and in the beginning of 1893, were thus reassuring, there were indications of a growing desire to extend the limits of the Company's operations. According to letters written from Victoria early in January, 1893, prospectors were dissatisfied with the supposed boundaries of Mashonaland. There were, it was said, Makalaka kraals twenty-five miles westward across the Shashi River, the people occupying them being in no way connected with the Matabele, whom indeed they regarded as enemies. According to these Makalakas, it was two days' walking, or perhaps forty miles, from their last kraal to where the Matabele would be met.

The Company, it was argued, seemed to be ignorant with regard to their boundary in this part of the country, and it was argued further that every assistance should be given to diggers and prospectors in the formation of "this new addition to the Victoria District." A few months later—in May, 1893—the complaint with regard to the western boundary of Mashonaland again made its appearance. The Shashi River, it was then laid down, was the boundary between Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Gold, it was alleged, had been discovered across the river, and prospectors were anxious to get over and peg out. "For obvious reasons," it was added, "they will have to bide a wee." It is worth noting, that although these significant hints were being given as to the necessity for extending the Company's boundary westward, there was no alarm felt as to the peaceful intentions of the Matabele, the opinion held in Victoria in the middle of May, 1893, being that Matabele scares were things of the past. That the settlers meantime had little to do was made evident by their wholesale indulgence in gambling, faro having become the nightly amusement in Victoria. Trade, moreover, had become dull, anxiety being expressed as to the disposal of the large stocks of goods that had accumulated, especially liquor.

In June, 1893, there arose rumours of disturbance. Dr. Jameson, in his capacity as Administrator, paid a visit to Victoria, in the neighbourhood of which, it would appear, some natives had to be "punished" for interfering with the telegraph wires. A little later Captain Lendy was reported to have punished Matabele who were raiding Makalaka kraals twelve miles west of Victoria. What appears to have happened was that these Makalakas stole cattle from

the Matabele and then took refuge with the Europeans in Mashonaland. By the middle of July the "Victoria scare," based on a letter from Lo Bengula to Captain Lendy, asking for the surrender of the marauding Makalakas, was in full swing. The request was refused, though an alternative offer was made to try the offending Makalakas in Victoria, and to punish them if found guilty. This offer may have been made in good faith or not; the good faith of Lo Bengula, however, was made clear by the fact, admitted at the time, that he wired to the magistrate at Victoria, through a European at Buluwayo, informing him that he was going to send a force to punish the Makalakas, and that no white persons would be molested. What answer Lo Bengula made, or might have made, to this alternative offer, never became even a matter of discussion. It had been resolved, apparently, that a quarrel was to be got up with Lo Bengula. The force sent by Lo Bengula remained peacefully at a distance from Victoria, molesting no one. A war fever, however, was immediately promoted. Those who had six months previously lauded the peaceful attitude of the Matabele had now no words strong enough for enlarging on "the Matabele menace," urging that the offensive must be taken in place of the defensive. The authorities showed themselves more violent than the settlers. Captain Lendy, with thirty-eight men, sallied forth from Victoria and made an unprovoked attack upon the Matabele, who were peacefully awaiting further instructions. According to the newspaper reports published at the time he "met" three hundred Matabele and "followed" them for nine miles, thirty Matabele, including two indunas, being killed.

The officials of the Chartered Company having once set the example by following, without provocation, a policy of violence and bloodshed, that policy naturally recommended itself to the minds of the settlers in the country. At a public meeting held in Fort Salisbury strong speeches were made in favour of an offensive war against the Matabele, the principal speaker, a Mr. E. A. Maund—a name known in connection with company flotations—urging that that was the time to break the power of the Matabele, by reason of the fact that part of the Matabele army was believed to be in Barotse-land, beyond the Zambesi. The churches joined in the cry for bloodshed, the head of the Wesleyan Mission being supported in this direction by the representatives of the Church of England. The newspapers, that a few months before had sung the praises of Lo Bengula as a peaceful chief, hastened to change their tune. “Smart offensive operations” were warmly recommended, the opinion being expressed that a column of occupation could be quickly and inexpensively got together, with Bechuanaland as a base, to occupy Buluwayo till arrangements for the control of the country had been completed. In the meantime Lo Bengula had sent what was styled by the newspapers as “an exceedingly humble apology.” It will somewhat puzzle impartial persons to understand for what it was that Lo Bengula had to apologise, seeing that some thirty of his own people had been shot down without provocation. However, it was officially stated, by the Administrator himself, that the Government would observe the greatest caution, and that it was endeavouring to get the Imperial Government to see the serious character of the menace.

Do what the war party would, however, it was found somewhat difficult to keep up the agitation. A patrol that had gone ten miles beyond the Matabeleland border reported that the Matabele had gone back to Buluwayo. Any stick, however, was good enough to beat a dog with, and the fact that the Matabele had gone back to Buluwayo was immediately interpreted as indicative of an intention to receive reinforcements and to get further instructions. There must, it was argued, be a complete suppression of the Matabele impis; no possible force of border police would suffice. Meantime, the situation was becoming somewhat dull, and the *Rhodesia Herald* felt bound to admit that it could not "make a very vast deal of copy" out of it. The roads in all directions were reported to be safe, and Europeans at Buluwayo were still untouched and uninterfered with. The most remarkable feature of the situation was the profession of deadly terror of the Matabele side by side with social festivities. The people who were invited by the clergy and the Press to believe that war was necessary, and that the Matabele had already "as good as declared in favour of exterminating the whites of Mashonaland," could enjoy themselves at subscription dances, and even appreciate the luxury of "a sumptuous sit-down supper." It began to be plain, too, that, in spite of the alarming news sent down country, the Imperial Government was by no means as yet prepared to sanction an aggressive war. Complaint was pathetically made that the British Government, by its "entirely unintelligible attitude," condemned the fine force that had been raised to inaction, and that the force in question, instead of being able to choose its own

fighting ground, was obliged "tamely to await the attack of the Matabele." The Home Government, it was urged, had "proved the great stumbling-block" in the way of those who were burning to annex Matabeleland. That the Home Government had its own views on the subject was to be gathered from proceedings in the House of Commons, where Mr. Sydney Buxton, then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, deprecated attempts to whitewash Captain Lendy, who, in his opinion, had shown culpable disregard of human life.

The burning desire at this juncture for a Matabele war—a desire prompted by financial necessity—forms a singular contrast to the absolute refusal of the Matabele to give any kind of provocation. The "forthcoming war" was a constant subject of conversation, yet the war refused to come. The justification for the warlike feeling peeped out in many curious little ways. There was money to be made, for example, by persons who were possessed of horses. In one instance forty mounts were taken by the Company for military purposes, at prices varying from £40 to one hundred guineas, the local newspaper pointing out that it said much for the spirit of the public that they yielded up their riding ponies and cart-horses without a grumble. Patriotism in this case was clearly profitable. It was equally profitable to the licensed victuallers who, on the plea that the "shock to industry" caused by the Matabele scare had injured their businesses, succeeded in obtaining a substantial concession from the Government in the shape of a reduction of their licenses. These justifications for an attack on the Matabele, however, were honest compared with that put forward by the chaplain to the forces, the Rev.

A. D. Sylvester, who, in a letter published in the *Rhodesia Herald*, urged the necessity of a war with the Matabele, on the ground that they were "determined to make a way for the spread of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Still, however, the war refused to come, in spite of the chaplains and canteen-keepers who yearned for it. Meanwhile the London *Times* was urging the settlers in Mashonaland to "exercise self-control," and not to ignore the antagonism in England. This may have been honest advice, based upon alarming reports that were being diligently cabled to England from Capetown. It is a remarkable thing that these reports did not proceed from the settlers in Mashonaland. It does not even appear that they were communicated to the settlers, for a complaint was made on the 6th of October by the *Rhodesia Herald*, that "Colenbrander's reports," though communicated to Capetown papers by the Chartered Company, were not given to newspapers in Salisbury. Mr. Colenbrander, who ten years before had proved very useful to officials in Zululand,¹ was at this time living, thanks to Lo Bengula's anxiety to respect the lives and interests of Europeans, in Buluwayo, from whence he forwarded to the Chartered Company in Capetown the alarming reports which were to force the Imperial Government to give its sanction to a Matabele war. Among these reports was one to the effect that the Matabele impi which had been in Barotseland had returned, that two impis were marching south, and that

¹ In Miss Frances Colenso's book, "The Ruin of Zululand" (vol. i. p. 143), Mr. Colenbrander is alluded to as one of "the Europeans who may well be called the evil geniuses of Zululand."

Victoria was to be the point of attack. It was by means of such reports as these that alarm and excitement were kept up in England, while the settlers in Mashonaland found nothing more important to occupy their attention than cricket-matches and weddings. Still they lived in hope, and had doubtless a profound faith that a war would be contrived somehow or other. The prospect for their individual selves was a brilliant one. If they took service as volunteers they received (1) protection for all claims in Mashonaland during the war and for six months after its termination, (2) a right to a 6,000 acre farm (3,000 morgen) in Matabeleland, (3) twenty claims in that country, and (4) the prospect of sharing in the loot taken, half of which was to go to the Company, which thus clung to its original principle of 50 per cent., and the remainder in equal shares to officers and men.

Early in October, 1893, an event occurred which greatly influenced the course of affairs. Mr. Rhodes arrived at Salisbury. Doubt and uncertainty at once gave way to activity. The day after his arrival he spent several hours at the telegraph office, conversing over the wires with the High Commissioner. The sanction of the High Commissioner, as representing the Imperial Government, was necessary for any aggressive movement against the Matabele. The High Commissioner found himself placed between two fires. Knowing the mind of the Colonial Office in London, he was bound to prevent a war if he could. On the other hand, the personal ascendancy which Mr. Rhodes had gained over him rendered it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to decline to give the sanction that was wanted. Meantime, while the High Commissioner was being worked

at one end, the English public were being worked at the other. The *Times*, according to cablegrams published in Salisbury on the 14th of October, had come to the conclusion that Dr. Jameson's reports—the reports, surely, sent down from Buluwayo to Capetown by the industrious Colenbrander!—removed all doubt as to the hostile intentions of the Matabele. A few days later, and it was clear that the Colonial Office had at last been won over to the war party, for the *Daily News*, representing the Ministry, had taken up a minatory attitude towards Lo Bengula. What Lo Bengula wanted above all things at this juncture was to get into direct touch with the High Commissioner. For this purpose, and with the High Commissioner's sanction, he despatched messengers southwards—messengers who, in defiance of all the rules of civilised warfare, were treated as prisoners, and shot dead on the pretext that they were attempting to escape. Had those messengers, however, reached the High Commissioner their mission would have been futile, for the High Commissioner had already practically given the sanction which was needed to justify the war. At the beginning of October he had sent a message to Lo Bengula, warning him that if impis were reported to be out he could not stop Dr. Jameson in taking what steps he thought fit for the safety of the white people. That was all that the Chartered Company needed. There can be no reasonable doubt that when Mr. Rhodes arrived at Salisbury on the 9th of October he was aware of the nature of this message. What more natural, then, or more providential, than that a day or two later the presence of "a large force of Matebele" should be reported on the Mashonaland side of the border?

Such a report was the keystone to the arch ; it was all that was wanted to give consecration to the long-projected attack on Matabeleland. It supplied a useful text to Mr. Rhodes for the speech he made at this critical juncture at the opening of the Salisbury battery—a speech which, characteristically abusive of every one who criticised the Chartered Company or himself, was referred to by his admirers in the local Press as “a steamer-hammer speech,” crushing all opponents, including Mr. Labouchere.

The first skirmish took place, not, be it observed, in Mashonaland, but across the Matabeleland border, this one fact showing that the forces of the Chartered Company, and not the Matabele, were the aggressors. The news of this skirmish, resulting in the traditional capture of cattle, came to the ears of the speculators in bloodshed like rain after a drought. Under the heading of “Galvanising the Market,” the *Rhodesia Herald* of the 27th of October described how, when a special telegram to the *Johannesburg Star*—one of Mr. Rhodes’ exponents in the Press—was read in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on the 20th of October, all stocks advanced, the shares of the Chartered Company advancing to 23s. buyers and no sellers. A day or two later and the good news as to the advance in Chartered Company’s shares was echoed from London, while almost at the same time notice was given of the calling of a special meeting of the shareholders in the Company for the purpose of doubling its capital by the issue of new shares to the nominal value of a million sterling. The invading force from Mashonaland, meeting with little serious resistance—a fact which, taken in conjunction with more recent events, shows how unprepared the Matabele were for war—marched forward to Buluwayo.

This news sent those who were to benefit by the war into ecstasies of delight. "The message that arrived yesterday morning," said the *Rhodesia Herald* of the 10th of November, referring to the reported occupation of Buluwayo, "has changed the face of heaven and earth." The Chartered Company was declared by its legal adviser, speaking at a public meeting at Bristol, to have deserved the gratitude of England. The success so cheaply gained finally converted the members of Mr. Gladstone's Government, including Mr. Gladstone himself. Good-humour so generally prevailed that it was even suggested that Lo Bengula had deserved well of the Mashonaland settlers, and that no one would grudge him "a decent pension and a good residence." The one little cloud on the horizon was to be found in the Company's apparent determination to adhere to all its old exactions, including the claim to 50 per cent. of all mining profits. "We must have an output," was the bitter cry; but who would take the trouble over mining when mining regulations were "conspicuous by their absence," and when the Company stood at every man's elbow, waiting to claim and carry off half of everything he might succeed in earning?

There was one dark blot upon the general sea of jubilation. Even when the Duke of Fife was congratulating shareholders in London on the brilliant conclusion of the Matabele difficulty, a party of gallant men, sent out without any adequate support on a rash errand into an unknown country, were lying dead in the wilderness, slain to the last man in a hopeless conflict with exasperated foes. There is, it may be said, no comparison between the conduct of those men and that of the Natal volunteers who, on the fatal day of Isandhlwana, died in their

attempt to arrest the Zulu attack on Lord Chelmsford's camp. They died bravely, however—the most costly victims of an unprovoked war forced on by the most reprehensible means for the purpose of bringing new life into the veins of a declining joint-stock speculation. It is no wonder, perhaps, that Mr. Rhodes should be anxious to build for them a mausoleum, even though the world to which he belongs—the world of finance and speculation—has no religion save that of success, and fears no ghost save the pale shade of bankruptcy. The world of speculation and finance, however, does not include the whole, or even more than a limited fraction, of humanity. And humanity, when it has had time to bethink itself, will have no words but those of horror and condemnation for the men who, whatever their rank or social surroundings, appear as the pillars of an undertaking which has abused the trust of a great nation and climbed to financial success by ways foul with deceit and saturated with bloodshed.

There is another consideration which forces itself on the mind. In the year 1814 a famous trial took place in London. Lord Cochrane and certain other persons were indicted for conspiracy. The conspiracy consisted in an organised attempt to influence the price of the Funds by bringing to London a circumstantial story of the abdication or death of Napoleon. They were all convicted, and sentenced to various penalties, including heavy fines and terms of imprisonment. Lord Cochrane, it is true, subsequently established his innocence of the plot. This, however, made no difference at the moment. It is impossible to avoid drawing a comparison between the case of Lord Cochrane and his associates and the case of the

Chartered Company in making use of false representations to promote a war for Stock Exchange purposes. For what reason is it that the treatment meted out to Lord Cochrane and his associates is not meted out to those who were concerned in the Matabeleland business in 1893? Has the law been altered, or has public morality become more lax? Or is it that some of those who were in the swim are too big to be touched?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEXT PLOT.

THE solution of the Matabeleland difficulty left the Chartered Company in a position of far greater solvency and influence than it had ever previously attained. The ease with which a warlike race like the Matabele had been subdued ; the extent of the territory added to the British Empire ; the dazzling prospects for investors in the fortunes of the victorious company—all these matters, duly glorified by the group of journals which interested themselves in the schemes of Mr. Rhodes, produced an impression which it became exceedingly difficult to dispute. The inner working of the Matabeleland plot was, it is true, understood by a good many persons in South Africa. The whole results, however, as represented through a friendly Press, were so attractive that there was little disposition on the part of the public in Great Britain to pay attention to what seemed small matters on the other side.

It would, nevertheless, be entirely a mistake to suppose that, as a result of the Matabele campaign, complete contentment reigned throughout the territories controlled by the Chartered Company. Buluwayo, it is true, was jubilant, for Buluwayo was, for reasons already indicated, the favoured place of the

Company. The spirit of swagger and rowdyism prevailing there is admirably indicated in letters written thence in the early part of 1894 to the *Rhodesia Herald*. "The Imperial Government," it was declared in one of these communications, "is not wanted here; there is a decided objection to them (*sic*); and so long as the Chartered Company keeps Exeter Hall out of Matabeleland they"—the Company—"will get all the support they want from the populace." The progress made by Buluwayo was contrasted with that of Salisbury to the great disadvantage of the latter. "It was a good twelve months," it was declared, "before a canteen was opened there; here, in less than three months, we have five." It will not cause surprise that with those who measured progress by the number of canteens the highest delight in existence was "to live like fighting-cocks." Elsewhere, however, the complaints made against the administration of the Company were very grave. The 50 per cent. clause was condemned as warmly as ever as an effective barrier to capitalists, while an offer made by the Company to lower its claim in special cases was denounced on the ground that it would inevitably lead to favouritism. The long delay in the issue of any mining law was regarded as sowing "a most useful crop of trouble and dissension." The mining companies as well as the Administration were held responsible for "the sham work that drags the country down." For nine months in the year, it was complained, the development of auriferous Mashonaland was "gravely performed by cable and telegraph." No good men, it was contended, would leave the more settled parts of South Africa to find that they were being "governed from London with a smattering of secretarial inter-

ference" at Capetown. The country was being managed, it was urged, on insufficient capital, while a very strong feeling was aroused in Salisbury through the keeping back, by the Secretary of the Chartered Company in Capetown, of a petition addressed to the High Commissioner. In short, the mismanagement of the Company, which was severely criticised in respect of the expenses of the Capetown office, was held to be responsible for the "absolute decline of Victoria" and the "growing paralysis of Salisbury." Early in April, 1894, an important public meeting was held at Salisbury, at which the action of the Company with regard to the railway from Beira was severely handled. It was pointed out that if Mr. Rhodes could raise money for his transcontinental telegraph, he could raise it for the Beira railway, and it was complained that he was playing up to his position in the Cape Colony at the expense of Mashonaland. The direction in which feeling was running among the more respectable and responsible settlers is well illustrated by an article that appeared in the *Rhodesia Herald* of the 6th of April, 1894. In this article the general results of three years' experience were summarised as follows :— •

"While the cause of this (unsatisfactory) state of things is patent, it is unfortunately impossible to fasten the blame on any one group of persons. That it is the feverish desire to grab enormous tracts of land in order to sell them off in lots to others at gigantic profits, instead of the desire to earn honest money by an actual output of gold, and that the present mining law actually encourages this perversion of enterprise, is not doubted by any sentient being in this part of the South African world. . . . The interest of the settler has both in justice and policy to be considered as well as the market interest of financiers, in whatever way they have been exalted with delegated authority from Her Majesty Queen Victoria."

No doubt these comments were to some extent the outcome of the jealousy existing between Salisbury and Buluwayo—Salisbury the established seat of Administration ; Buluwayo the more favoured commercially. There was, however, one respect in which the rival centres thought alike. Neither of them deemed it too early to start a stock exchange—temples of gambling in which the possessors of imaginary gold-reefs might fleece each other in the intervals of fleecing the British investor.

The fate and the progress of Rhodesia, however, ceased from about this period to occupy the serious attention of the founders and controllers of the Chartered Company. It was becoming time to organise the next plot, the outcome of which was to be the capture of the Witwatersrand goldfields, and their subjection to precisely the same autocratic authority and control as that which had been established over the Kimberley diamond-mines. For the accomplishment of this end three things were requisite—(1) the gradual amalgamation of Johannesburg mining properties into two or three dominating groups ; (2) the establishment of Mr. Rhodes in the eyes of the Government and people of Great Britain as a great Imperialist and patriot ; and (3) the formulating of such complaints against the Government of the South African Republic as might justify the British Government in intervening on behalf of the foreign population of the Transvaal. Those who are acquainted with the history of the amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond-mines and with the manner in which they are now used for purposes of financial and political control, have been very well able to comprehend the objects that were being pursued in Johannesburg by the heroes of the Kimberley amal-

gamation. An amalgamation of the Johannesburg mines on the same lines as the Kimberley amalgamation could not fail, if only the needful power of political administration were also present, to make the heads of the amalgamation absolute masters of the gold industry and of the bodies and souls of all in any way dependent on it. Controlled in this way, the value of stocks could be worked up and down as easily as an hydraulic lift is worked by the movement of a lever. Not only would employees of every kind and grade be compelled to give political support, as at Kimberley, to the schemes and interests of the controlling capitalists, but these capitalists would at the same time either control or absorb every kind of commercial transaction. That is the answer to be always given to any question as to Mr. Rhodes' motives in organising and heading a conspiracy against the Transvaal. To Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit and to the archangels of finance who, with the approval of the *Times*, backed them in London, the success of the conspiracy meant millions, while the titled associates who stood by to guarantee its respectability to the British nation would gather far more substantial crumbs of comfort than ever fell from the table of the rich man into the lap of Lazarus.

By the year 1894 two of the necessary conditions were either fulfilled or were in a fair way of being so. Mr. Rhodes had succeeded in sufficiently establishing his reputation as a great and successful Imperialist and patriot. That was point number one. Further than this, amalgamation of the Johannesburg mines had already been taking place on a very extensive scale. By means of judicious investments, followed by the appointment of directors nominated in their

own interest, the leading financial houses had already organised the great bulk of the mining properties into two or three leading groups—just such groups as were existent prior to the final amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond-mines. The Barnato group, the Rhodes group, the Eckstein group, the Robinson group—these were already well known and recognised in 1894. Of these groups the Robinson group has so far stood aloof from the others, while the Rhodes and Eckstein groups, controlled respectively by Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit—the Castor and Pollux of the gold-mining firmament—are to all intents and purposes already one. A little more amalgamation, such as happened in Kimberley when Mr. Barnato and the shareholders in the Kimberley mine were absorbed by Mr. Rhodes and the shareholders in the De Beers mine, and, save for the Robinson group, which might or might not be bought out, the gold-mining interest on the Witwatersrand would be absolutely unified.

Here, then, were two of the requisite conditions either fulfilled or well on their way to be fulfilled. What was wanted was the establishment of such political discontent, or appearance of political discontent—it did not really much matter which to schemers so well able to control the channels of public information—as might bring the power of the British Government to the aid of some movement having the appearance of a popular insurrection against the Transvaal Government. The steps by which it was sought to compass this end are full of interest. Before, however, these steps can be traced, there are two other matters which demand attention, viz. : (1) the policy of the Transvaal Government, and (2) the position of the foreign population.

In order to appreciate and understand the policy of the Transvaal Government it is necessary to go back to that critical juncture when, in 1890, that Government found itself, as a reward for its liberal action towards the foreign population, coerced by the threat of a British ultimatum into an abandonment of rights expressly reserved to it under the London Convention of 1884. In the session of 1890, the Transvaal Volksraad, on the invitation of President Kruger, and in the face of the strong and natural prejudice created by the thoughtless insult to the Transvaal flag in Johannesburg, had entered on a programme of progressive legislation, calculated and intended to meet the requirements of a new situation, and to confer political rights on such of the foreign population as were prepared to make their homes in the Republic. The amendment of the Gold Law, the sanction given to the construction of railways, the creation of a second Legislative Chamber, on a wider representative basis, for the consideration of all matters in which the new population might be supposed to be specially interested—these were all well-considered and liberal measures, proposed and assented to in a sincere spirit of goodwill, and welcomed by the foreign population as substantial and liberal concessions. As a reward for these concessions, as if to mark the appreciation of the British Government of the adoption of this progressive and generous policy, the Transvaal Government was called upon, in the most unfriendly manner that was possible, to surrender rights which had only six years previously been admitted, and to give up its fiscal liberty of action by entering perforce into a Customs Union for the sole benefit of a British Colony. This latter demand was, it is true,

practically withdrawn ; it was too shameless to be persisted in. The other demand was maintained, and was submitted to by the Transvaal Government and Volksraad under the pressure of that *force majeure* which is an impossible factor in any treaties or agreements which are intended to serve as means towards the establishment and maintenance of friendly relations. The Transvaal Government and Volksraad, however, although the demands were made by the highest representative of the British Government in South Africa, never regarded the British Government as really responsible for those demands. They saw that the demands were the demands of Mr. Rhodes, the speculator, who wished at one and the same time to secure his position in the territories he had been authorised to exploit, and to express his gratitude for his recent elevation to the Cape Premiership—a position of immense advantage to himself—by endeavouring to compel the people of the Transvaal to consume Cape brandy. From that moment Mr. Rhodes was recognised in Pretoria as the determined and dangerous enemy of the South African Republic — dangerous because, by his position as Premier of the Cape Colony, and by the control he could thus exercise over the High Commissioner, he was able to gain acceptance for his own views at the hands of the British Imperial Government. From the moment of his ascent to the position of Cape Premier, in the middle of 1890, to the moment of his resignation in the beginning of 1896—that is, for five and a half years—he stood between the South African Republic and the British Government, disturbing the relations between the two, carrying out his own schemes on one hand and misinterpreting the acts and policy of the Transvaal

Government on the other hand. All through those years it has been the wish and aim of the Transvaal Government to come fairly face to face with the British Government. Had this been possible, none of the irritations of the past five years would ever have arisen, and it is a fact that, while a Liberal Administration was in office, the Transvaal Government, in spite of Mr. Rhodes, came to something like a complete and friendly understanding with the British Government with regard to Swazieland. The fact remains, however, that, owing to the control exercised by Mr. Rhodes over Lord Loch, who was occupying the post of High Commissioner, the whole situation in South Africa has for five or six years past been represented to the British Government and the British people exactly as best suited the aims of Mr. Rhodes and his associates in the great conspiracy which, in the year 1894, was running on rapidly to its *dénouement*.

It is of the very utmost importance to keep this in mind, for it contains the key to the whole situation, especially since 1894, the year in which Mr. Rhodes, the Chartered Company having been reinvigorated by the blood of the Matabele, began to turn his serious attention to the seizure of the South African Republic. The questions have been often asked, "Why did the Transvaal Government and the Volksraad not follow up more thoroughly the progressive and enlightened policy adopted in 1890? Why has it seemed to be anxious to cultivate closer relations with foreign Powers?" The answer to both questions is the same—viz., that the position occupied and the policy followed by Mr. Rhodes compelled the Transvaal Government to act with the greatest circumspection as to the granting of

increased political privileges to foreigners, and to aim at strengthening its position by seeking the moral support of friendly Powers. Those who in Johannesburg were most loudly promoting political agitation were plainly and avowedly in league with the great financial houses that drew their inspiration from Mr. Rhodes. The first appearance, towards the end of 1894, of German warships in Delagoa Bay, was notoriously the outcome of persistent reports of an intention on the part of the Chartered Company to take possession of that port, while the further outcome of that action on the part of Germany, in the interest of the Transvaal, was the conclusion of an understanding between Great Britain and Germany for the maintenance of the *status quo* at Delagoa Bay. If it is asked, "What had the Transvaal to do with Germany, or Germany with the Transvaal?" the answer is of the simplest, and it is this—that when all the resources of financial intrigue were being employed from Capetown to prevent the Transvaal raising the loan necessary to complete the railway from Delagoa Bay to Johannesburg, Berlin financiers stepped in to the rescue. Hence it comes about that—thanks again to the bullying and browbeating policy pursued by Mr. Rhodes, and unhappily, though ignorantly, endorsed by the British Government—German capital has gained a footing in South Africa for which probably it would otherwise have waited in vain, and because German capital has gained that footing, the German Government has acquired a *locus standi* which it certainly did not possess when Mr. Rhodes first became Premier of the Cape Colony.

All this has to be remembered. What has also to be remembered is that never for one single moment

has the Transvaal Government and Volksraad been animated with a spirit of hostility and repression towards the ordinary foreign immigrant, and that never for one single moment, when seeking the moral support of a friendly European Power, has it harboured any design against Great Britain or against legitimate British influence—the influence that belongs to facts—in South Africa. The action of the Transvaal Government has been strictly defensive, and defensive in both cases against the same thing—that is, against the attacks being made, through the agency and inspiration of Mr. Rhodes, on its independence both from within and without. Was this defensive attitude justified? It has been more than justified. The assaults made on the independence of the Republic at the end of 1895—assaults which were organised by Mr. Rhodes—represented even more than the worst that the Pretoria Government feared.

So far as regards the policy of the Transvaal Government. What, in 1894, when the plot against the independence of the Transvaal began to be seriously worked, was the position of the foreign population?

Those who read the assertions and arguments which so often find a place in English newspapers might be led to suppose that the foreign resident in the Transvaal is a persecuted creature, crushed down by oppressive taxation, scorned by the ignorant Boer, and deprived of the luxuries of civilisation. That was the picture drawn in the famous manifesto put forward by the Transvaal National Union at the time of the abortive insurrection, and which Mr. Chamberlain, in partial ignorance of the real position of affairs, regarded as a proper and consti-

tutional demand for reform. The idea of the persecuted and oppressed Uitlander has become so fixed in the minds of English people—thanks to the efforts of those who were occupied in preparing and justifying a revolt—that even the plainest statement of facts seems powerless to dispossess it. No one will claim, no one ever has claimed, that the Government of the South African Republic is perfect. Having regard to the extraordinary changes that have come over the country during the last ten years, it is really a marvel that the Government is not much more imperfect than it is. The present position of the Transvaal Executive has been not inaptly compared to the position of the crew of a collier brig who might suddenly find themselves in control of a first-class mail-steamer. However desirous they might be of doing their best, they could hardly avoid making some mistakes. If the foreign population had much more to complain of than they have, it ought not to cause either surprise or indignation. And what have they to complain of? Really, the life of the average foreigner in Johannesburg is one of the freest imaginable. He can follow his trade, he can follow his profession, no matter what it is, without any question or hindrance from the Government. His position as an Uitlander in no way hinders him from investing in property, from practising as a lawyer in the courts, from undertaking, in fact, as freely as he could undertake it in his own country, any lawful kind of business or occupation. If he pays a high rent for his house, that is not the fault of the Government, but of the land speculators who have bought up building-stands. If his water supply is somewhat defective, it is the fault of the big foreign capitalists

who think more of the dividends they put into their own pockets than of the water they put into the people's mouths. A Government which depends on the goodwill of a strictly Sabbatarian population allows the Uitlander to spend his Sunday exactly as he pleases. He may play lawn-tennis if he likes—and indeed he generally does so ; he may engage in cricket matches ; he can attend so-called sacred concerts, the programmes of which are drawn from the music-hall or the comic opera. If he is in a gayer mood he may witness on a Sunday evening displays of "living pictures" which certainly would not be tolerated at the Royal Aquarium. To put it shortly, allowing for little drawbacks of climate and the expense of living, the Uitlander can live more at his ease in Johannesburg or Pretoria than in almost any other city under the sun.

But he is taxed.

How is he taxed ? There is probably no one in the Transvaal, rich or poor, whose personal taxes amount to more than £5 a year. If it is complained that he is taxed through his interest in the gold industry, it is easy to make an appeal to published figures. In 1895 the Crown Reef Gold Mining Company produced gold worth upwards of £420,000, and distributed nearly £97,000 in profits. Its payments to the Government for rents, licenses, and all other privileges and rights amounted to £1,191 9s. 10d. In the same year the Robinson Company, which had produced £651,000 in gold and distributed £346,000 in dividends, paid to the Government £395 11s. 8d. The New Chimes Company, producing £93,000 in gold and distributing £32,000 in profits, paid under the head of rates and licenses, together with insurance premiums, £664 16s. 5d.

The Transvaal Coal Trust produced 266,945 tons of coal, and paid to the Government £53 15s., while the Consolidated Land and Exploration Company, in which the Ecksteins are the largest shareholders, and which owns more than 250 farms of 6,000 acres each, paid to the Government in the shape of taxes, including absentee tax, no more than £722 2s. 6d.

These figures are sufficiently eloquent by themselves. They become more eloquent when they are placed beside the 50 per cent. impost claimed by the Chartered Company on all gold-mining enterprise in Rhodesia.

But what about indirect taxation? Here are the facts.

All machinery for mining purposes is subject to only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. import dues, the term machinery being stretched by the Government to its uttermost possibilities to meet the mining industry, and it is made to include sheet lead, cyanide, &c. All other articles not specially rated are subject to an *ad valorem* duty of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the Cape Colonist paying an *ad valorem* duty of 12 per cent. Specially rated articles affecting the white miners, such as tea, coffee, butter, rice, soap, sugar, are in most cases subject to lower, and only in one instance to higher, duties than in the Cape Colony.

Here is a comparison :—

	CAPE COLONY.		TRANSVAAL.
Butter	3d. per lb.	.....	5s. od. per 100 lbs.
Cheese	3d. „	.....	5s. od. „
Coffee	12s. 6d. per 100 lbs.	.....	2s. 6d. „
Rice	3s. 6d. „	.....	1s. 6d. „
Soap	4s. 2d. „	.....	5s. od. „
Sugar	6s. 3d. „	.....	3s. 6d. „
Tea	8d. per lb.	.....	2s. 6d. „
Guns	£1 per barrel.	.....	10s. od. per barrel.

The article maize, the principal food of the Kaffirs, pays in the Cape Colony 2s. per 100 lbs., and in the Transvaal 2s. 6d. per 100 lbs. Periodically, through droughts, locusts, or other causes, prices for this commodity rise rapidly, often from 10s. 6d. to 26s. 6d. per bag, variations which are only slightly affected by the import duty. Nevertheless the Government has in every instance of excessive prices abated the duty for the time being.

In the light of these facts, it can hardly be contended that the Uitlander in the Transvaal is oppressed in respect of any matter affecting his material comfort. Complaint has been made at times of the corruption of officials, of the granting of concessions and monopolies, of general maladministration. As regards corruption, it is quite possible that in some cases bribes offered to officials by wealthy Uitlanders have been accepted, but the charge of general corruption of officials is altogether unfounded. As regards monopolies and concessions, the dynamite monopoly is often quoted as an instance of the manner in which monopolies are granted, to the detriment of the mining interest. It has been complained that the Government retain a right to charge 90s. a case for what can be produced at 30s. a case. These figures, however, are exaggerated both ways. The Government charge is 85s. a case, and as the dynamite used by De Beers, at Kimberley, costs more than 60s. a case laid down there, it can hardly be held that 85s. is a high charge in Johannesburg, having regard to the much greater distance of Johannesburg from the sea. In this matter of the dynamite concession, moreover, it was a choice between a foreign monopoly and a local monopoly, while in the reports of mining companies in which

explosives are separately accounted for, it is shown that while total working expenses run up to over 30s. per ton, the cost of explosives is less than 1s. 3d. per ton. As regards the railway concession, the truth of the matter is that the Transvaal Railway Company—the Netherlands South African Railway Company, that is—by providing competing routes to Johannesburg from Natal and Delagoa Bay, keeps in check the monopoly which would certainly be taken great advantage of by the Cape Colony, if the only route to Johannesburg was from Cape ports.

There are, besides the alleged material grievances alluded to above, what may be called the political grievances, such as (1) the alleged Government of the country by a small faction of Hollanders, (2) the language grievance, (3) the educational grievance, and (4) the franchise grievance.

As regards the first mentioned of these, an honest and impartial person would search for evidence of it in vain. All the members of the Executive, with one exception, are South African born ; so are the majority of heads and sub-heads of departments. In the Civil Service generally, it has been shown that 83 per cent. of its members are South African born, not a few of them being of English extraction. Out of five judges, two are South African born and members of the English Bar, two are Hollanders, and one is Scotch. The Minister of Mines, the Treasurer-General, the Auditor-General, the Postmaster-General, the Surveyor-General are all South African born. The only Hollander of any distinction in the Government is the State Secretary, Dr. Leyds, a man of exceptional ability and integrity, who, in spite of enormous difficulties and constant attacks, has deserved and retained the confidence both of

the President and the Volksraad. To say that he is the ablest and most cultured official in South Africa is to say what is simply true, and if his ability has excited jealousy and resentment, it is only what a general study of human nature would lead one to expect.

As regards the language question and the education question, consideration has to be paid to the language most usually spoken in the country. Entirely misleading ideas are liable to be formed on this point, owing to the erroneous impression as to the relative strength of the Dutch and the foreign population. A habit has arisen of speaking as if the foreign population greatly outnumbered the burgher population. The case is quite the opposite of this. The census of Johannesburg taken in 1896 by the Johannesburg Sanitary Committee showed that the population of the place had been greatly overestimated, the male European population of all ages only amounting to 31,000. As there are 25,000 burghers on the military register of the Republic, it seems fair to assume that the burgher population is at least 150,000, while the foreign population is probably not more than half that. Of the 150,000 burghers and their families fully two-thirds do not understand English. Is it, then, unreasonable to claim that the official language, the language of official documents, shall be the language spoken by two-thirds of the people, or do the women and children count for nothing? But although the official language by law is Dutch, there is not a single Government office in which there is not English or German spoken to those who cannot speak Dutch. In the higher courts the judges frequently shut their eyes to the use of the English

language in the witness-box, and in the lower courts English is invariably spoken by English litigants. As regards the education question, there is not now much need to discuss it. The Volksraad, during the session of 1896, passed a Law in further expansion of the principles laid down in the Law of 1892, and under the regulations drawn up in accordance with the law, as now expanded, State schools, in which English-speaking children will be taught in English, and which are placed under the control of representative School Boards, have been established in the gold-mining districts.

The franchise question has been made the subject of special complaint. Here, however, there are several difficulties in the way. In the first place, the majority of the foreign population do not want the franchise, because they are quite content with their position as it is, and do not wish to become—as they would have to do if they exercised the franchise—burghers of the South African Republic. The very agitation over the question has increased the difficulty; for the more there seems to be a possibility of a serious misunderstanding between the Transvaal and Great Britain, the less disposed British subjects become to place themselves in a position which might compel them to fight against their own countrymen. Meantime, the Government and the Volksraad have been compelled to the conclusion that the agitation for the franchise is not genuine—that it has not been encouraged with the view to obtaining a concession, but with the object of establishing a grievance. They have seen, too, that to grant wholesale political privileges to the foreign residents in Johannesburg, even if those foreign residents were willing to become naturalised,

would be to a great extent to deliver up the interests of all the independent classes—the shopkeepers, the miners, the professional men—into the hands of a small group of capitalists who would use their influence, as they have used it elsewhere, to corrupt the political atmosphere and to subject the interests of every individual to their own. The political tyranny that exists in Kimberley, where employees of De Beers are compelled to vote to order on pain of dismissal, supplies a sufficient illustration of what would happen in Johannesburg if once the financial conspirators secured political control. A further and most significant illustration is supplied by a well-known incident in connection with the revolutionary movement in Johannesburg, when miners under the control of the leading conspirators were ordered to take up arms under penalty of forfeiting their wages. That in the vast majority of cases they preferred the latter course, is in itself a complete exposure of the hollowness of the whole revolutionary movement. In all known cases of revolution arising from discontent on the part of a mining population, it has been the miners who have taken the lead and dragged others in with them. In this case the miners, who had never dreamed of discontent, were ordered to take up arms, and refused.

Out of the facts of the position as actually existing in Johannesburg and other gold-mining centres it was utterly impossible for any honest man to manufacture a serious complaint, least of all such a complaint as would in any respect justify a revolution to secure redress. So far from being treated with unfairness or hardship, the foreign residents in the Transvaal have been treated with marked

consideration. The interests of the gold industry have been consulted in every possible way. If the Government has not in some instances been able to do all it might have wished to do, it has been because the reckless language of a portion of the Press and the overbearing attitude of the capitalist agitators have aroused the suspicions and the resentment of the Volksraad. Yet out of this position of things a case had to be got up against the Transvaal Government in order to justify the revolutionary movement that had been planned in the interest of the small group of capitalists who had determined to make themselves as supreme over the gold industry in Johannesburg as they had become over the diamond industry in Kimberley.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PLOT EXPLODES.

THE machinery of the plot against the Transvaal moved slowly till, with the latter part of the year 1894, the Chartered Company had fairly begun to digest Matabeleland. Then, as in the concluding movement of an overture, the pace was quickened, in preparation for the crash that was to precede the rising of the curtain on the first act of the new amalgamation of South Africa for the benefit of the anointed millionaire.

The different moves in the great game that was being played form a study of no small interest. Some of these moves were effective towards the end which was aimed at; some were abortive. Among the abortive moves may be reckoned (1) the threats against Delagoa Bay, (2) the attempt to create a difficulty between London and Pretoria in connection with the coinage question, and (3) the attempt to create such a difficulty in connection with the commandeering of Uitlanders for the Malaboch war.

The object of the threats against Delagoa Bay was clear and precise. If by any means the Chartered Company could come into possession of Delagoa Bay, or gain a footing there, the Cape Govern-

ment—that is, Mr. Rhodes—would possibly be able so to interfere with the working of the Transvaal railway from the Portuguese border to Pretoria as to compel the Transvaal Government to meet certain unjust demands made by the Cape Colony with regard to the general division of railway receipts from the Johannesburg traffic, and also with regard to the establishment of a general Customs Union from which the Cape Colony should be the chief gainer. These threats against Delagoa Bay became matter of current report after that interview between President Kruger and Mr. Rhodes, at which—according to the latter—they both lost their tempers. Mr. Rhodes, according to himself, demanded at that interview that the South African Republic should enter the one-sided Customs Union already existing between the Cape Colony and the Free State. Why did Mr. Rhodes make that demand? Because the Transvaal Government had just agreed to the extension of the railway from the Natal border to Johannesburg, Natal thus being placed in the position of being able to recover, at an early date, the trade which had been diverted to the Cape route in 1892, when the Cape railway system was opened to the Rand. If the Transvaal, however, would only enter into that Customs Union, the trade of Natal, which enjoyed a low tariff as well as a shorter mileage to Johannesburg, would be seriously injured; for unless Natal, under the pressure of circumstances, abandoned its free trade policy and raised its tariff to the level of that prevailing in the Customs Union, its trade would be ruined by the imposition of the full Customs Union tariff on its own border in addition to its own tariff. Mr. Rhodes, in a word, was in the position of an enemy of the gold-mining

industry, seeking to destroy the commercial competition by which that industry benefited. Mr. Kruger, in defence of the interests of the gold industry, rejected Mr. Rhodes' proposal.

It was after this, and after the Transvaal Government had promptly rejected a demand that the Cape Government should be allotted 50 per cent. of the whole South African railway receipts on Johannesburg traffic—the right to 50 per cent. of everything seems to be a fixed idea with South African millionaires—that the seizure of Delagoa Bay began to be talked of. The Chartered Company had already been busy stirring up trouble in that direction. The attempt made in 1891, at the time of the *Countess of Carnarvon* incident, to get the chief Gungunhana to rise against the Portuguese had been followed up by other little manœuvres. It is a fact on record that when Gungunhana was finally brought to book by the Portuguese authorities, a sum of £2,000 in English gold was found at his kraal, contained in Chartered Company's bags. It is also on record that, among other things found, there was a silver cup manufactured by a Capetown silversmith, purporting to have been sent to Gungunhana by Queen Victoria, and brought there by persons one of whom, at least, was in the Chartered Company's service. Thus there was material to be worked on if a desire existed to create complications at Delagoa Bay. Any scheme of the kind, however, was rendered abortive by the intervention of the German Government, which, acting in the interest of German shareholders in the Transvaal railway, sent two warships to Delagoa Bay, and came to an understanding with the British Government as to the maintenance at that port of

the *status quo*. That Mr. Rhodes entertains no small grudge against both the Transvaal and German Governments for this intervention can be understood.

The coinage question arose in this way : The Transvaal Government, whether wisely or unwisely, but certainly acting within its right, determined to establish its own coinage and its own National Bank. In spite both of abuse and ridicule, the Transvaal Government carried out both these intentions. The coinage was above suspicion ; the bank soon began to do a very considerable business. Actuated by a perhaps not unnatural desire to hamper a rival, the Standard Bank of South Africa, of which Lord Rosmead was then chairman, adopted a practice of receiving from the Mint in London large quantities of English silver coinage,¹ sending it out to South Africa, and suddenly demanding gold for it from the Transvaal National Bank. The Transvaal Government, not wishing to see an institution in which it was interested damaged by a commercial rival, put an end to this proceeding by prohibiting the wholesale importation of foreign coinage. A cry was at once raised that this was a breach of the London Convention. The British Government, however, did not trouble itself about the matter, so this move proved abortive.

Then there was the commandeering business. A tremendous outcry was raised because a considerable number of British subjects resident in the Transvaal were "commandeered" for service in

¹ It has been said that this silver coinage was supplied by the Mint at bullion value. Possibly this was not the case ; but if it was, clearly the Standard Bank would make an enormous profit on such transactions.

the field against one Malaboch, a recusant native chief. Again it was declared by the enemies of the Transvaal Government that the London Convention had been violated. It turned out, however, that, as Great Britain had not followed the example of other foreign Powers in executing a treaty exempting its own subjects from service in the field, the Transvaal Government was entirely within its right. The complaint, too, became ridiculous when it was known that, while five British subjects had been arrested and photographed as patriots for refusing to comply with the behest of the Government, more than a hundred had willingly gone to the front, enjoyed their spell of rough life, been compensated for their services, and received the full rights, if they cared to accept them, of burghers of the Republic. Meantime misunderstanding in the future was guarded against by the execution of a special treaty between Great Britain and the Transvaal Government. The incident, however, was notable because it gave occasion for the High Commissioner — Lord Loch — to visit Pretoria, and because in connection with his visit to Pretoria two events took place. First, his presence was taken advantage of by certain noisy and irresponsible persons in Pretoria to insult President Kruger; next, he had a conversation with a certain Mr. Lionel Phillips, a member of one of the leading financial houses in Johannesburg, in which was suggested the propriety of assembling a force of Imperial troops on the western border of the Transvaal for the support of any revolutionary movement that might take shape at the goldfields.

These were some of the ineffective and abortive

moves in the game. A more effective move was made when the conspiring capitalists took under their control the organisation known as the Transvaal National Union. Up to this date the Transvaal National Union had been a good deal of a laughing-stock, existing apparently for the purpose of persuading the people of Johannesburg and the Transvaal Government that its leaders were a political power. It had no money and no policy. Any action it took in the way of public meetings depended on half a dozen men who had nothing very much to do and who imagined themselves to be possessed of an oratorical gift, while its President—a Mr. Tudhope, who had once been a member of a Cape Ministry—deemed it equally consistent with his duty to lecture on the greatness of the Dutch race in South Africa or to take the lead in singing “God save the Queen” in a Presbyterian church, as a political demonstration against the Transvaal Government, after the conclusion of an evening service. The people who attended the meetings of the National Union attended them simply to amuse themselves and fill up the time, just as they would have attended any other circus. In 1894, however, things became different. The National Union was seriously taken in hand. Mr. Tudhope retired from the presidency, to be succeeded by Mr. Charles Leonard, a man far more capable of carrying out the views of the financial controllers of the situation. The organisation began to find itself possessed of money. It had at first been proposed that the gold-mining companies should contribute to a political fund, which the Union was to administer. This proposal, however, was vetoed by shareholders who threatened to apply to the High Court for an

interdict against this illegal use of their money. The money required was, nevertheless, found somewhere, and one of the first uses made of it was the organisation of a monster petition to the Volksraad, professing to come from Johannesburg generally, praying for, or rather demanding, political rights. This petition was said to have appended to it 38,000 signatures, and possibly it was supported by 38,000 names. It is, however, as easy to obtain names to a petition in South Africa as it is to pluck daisies in England in spring, and the men who were paid four shillings a hundred for the signatures they obtained at the street corners of Johannesburg were not likely to be backward in earning their money. The members of the Volksraad, who knew very well how the signatures had been obtained, received the petition with derision. A subsequent examination showed that while many of the signatures were obviously spurious, others were repeated more than once, while some were evidently not the signatures of Europeans at all. That these discrepancies should be discovered was not surprising; it was arithmetically impossible to obtain 38,000 honest signatures in a community which two years later contained only 31,000 European males of all ages. The Volksraad, however, made a mistake both in laughing at the petition and in receiving it seriously. It was not intended for them. It was intended for export. It was intended to create in England an impression of the obstinate perversity of the Transvaal Government and Volksraad in denying political rights to foreign residents. It was intended to serve that purpose, and it has served it. Owing to that petition the great bulk of the people of Great Britain became for the time being impressed with

the idea (1) that the foreign residents formed a majority of the Transvaal population, and (2) that the burgher minority were resolutely determined to allow them no voice in the government of the country.

Early in 1895 a general sense of uneasiness began to prevail among those who were watching the progress of events. So great did this uneasiness become that journals interested in the cause of Republican principles openly accused the Chartered Company and the Cape Government—both represented and controlled by Mr. Rhodes—of plotting against the Transvaal. The accusation was indignantly denied from Capetown by journals known to be in the confidence of Mr. Rhodes. Still, the uneasiness did not abate, and one or two little events served to increase it. One of these events was the retirement from Parliament of Mr. Hofmeyr. Various reasons were given for this retirement, but by persons who were intimately acquainted with him it was more than hinted that his retirement was owing to a desire to dissociate himself from Mr. Rhodes, whose policy was tending in a direction with which Mr. Hofmeyr could not sympathise. Another incident was the passing of the *Cape Times*, one of the two leading Capetown papers, into the control of the Rhodesian party. The *Cape Argus*, once the property of Mr. Saul Solomon, and inspired by his statesmanship and public spirit, had for some years been practically the organ of Mr. Rhodes, the *Cape Times*, although Imperialist, being fairly independent. The placing of the *Cape Times* under the same control as the *Cape Argus* was an ominous symptom of activity in the Rhodesian camp. The meaning of the step became plainer

when Mr. Edmund Garrett, who had been specially brought out from England by Mr. Rhodes to edit the *Cape Times*, stated—at Bloemfontein, in the first week of June, 1895—that his presence in South Africa was associated with a determination, on the part of Mr. Rhodes and those acting with him, to “force the pace.” What “forcing the pace” meant was explained to be this—that, as the health of Mr. Rhodes was somewhat uncertain, it had been resolved to carry out his ultimate plans without further delay. Mr. Garrett, it may be added, manifested his interpretation of the part he was to play by diligently preaching, from Capetown, the gospel of insurrection in Johannesburg from the moment of his first arrival in South Africa till the final collapse of the Jameson raid. That in the meantime the Imperial Government was being induced to adopt an unfriendly attitude towards the Transvaal was illustrated by the sudden annexation of the territories of two chiefs—Umbegesa and Zambaan—lying between the Transvaal border and the sea. The Transvaal Government was not consulted with regard to this sudden annexation; it was not even informed of it beforehand. The unfriendliness of the act was rendered all the more marked by the fact that in the final convention for the settlement of Swazieland a right of way to the sea through the annexed territory had been reserved to the Transvaal. “The thing itself is bad,” said at the time a well-known Capetown politician who returned to office on Mr. Rhodes’ resignation, “and the manner of doing it has been worse. It is the worst thing that has been done since the annexation of 1877.”

These were the signs visible on the surface.

What was going on beneath the surface? Information with regard to this has leaked out subsequently. As early as May, 1895, a volunteer force was being raised in Rhodesia under the command of Sir John Willoughby—a business, having regard to the cost of horses, arms, and accoutrements, involving no small amount of money. According to information imparted by Sir John Willoughby, about the 20th of May, to the men who had been enrolled, there was no intention to send them on an expedition to Barotseland. Dr. Jameson, it was said, did not want them to go beyond the border of Rhodesia, as he was sure of volunteers for this purpose whenever he did want them, but he hoped to conduct a “camp of exercise” once a year. At this time, too, those negotiations were in progress for the transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the Chartered Company, which enabled the Company to have a colourable pretext for bringing Dr. Jameson and the Matabeleland police close to the Transvaal border. There can be little doubt, moreover, that already arrangements were in progress by which arms and ammunition were smuggled into Johannesburg and accumulated by De Beers Company at Kimberley, another centre of Rhodesian activity. And in the midst of and side by side with these secret preparations for the overthrow of Transvaal independence, the occasion of the official opening of the railway from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay was marked by such expressions of congratulation from the British Government to President Kruger as were only compatible with the existence of the most friendly relations. That those congratulations were sincere need not be doubted. That they were sent served to give the Transvaal Government increased

justification for the conviction that, however numerous Mr. Rhodes' opportunities of making use of Imperial authority for his own purposes, the policy which he was pursuing was in no sense the policy of the British Government.

A few months later the force of misrepresentation led to a serious conflict of opinion between London and Pretoria. This conflict arose over what has been known as "the drifts question"—a matter which, while totally misunderstood in England, has been freely made use of for the purpose of basing charges of bad faith against the Transvaal Government. The whole matter arose out of a local dispute between the Transvaal Railway Company and the Cape Government railways with regard to a certain through railway rate. With the view of forcing the hand of the Transvaal railway administration, the Cape railway department adopted the practice of unloading trucks on the south side of the Vaal River—on Free State soil—and conveying their contents by ox-wagon, across the river by the "drift," over the fifty odd miles to Johannesburg. No one in Johannesburg was benefited by this arrangement, for though there might be delays, owing to the greatly increasing traffic, in obtaining delivery of goods brought into Johannesburg by rail, there was equal delay, and greater risk, involved in taking them across the river and into Johannesburg by ox-wagon. The Transvaal Government, naturally not caring to see an injury inflicted on a railway enterprise in which it is a partner, issued a proclamation closing the drift to traffic. Now, without going so far as to say that a South African Government which builds a bridge across a river

has a common-law right to close the drift which the bridge supersedes, there can be no question that the practice of closing a drift on the building of a bridge has been very largely followed. In more than one instance in Natal, legislation authorising the levying of tolls on crossing a new bridge has been coupled with the prohibition, under penalty, of using the drift which the bridge superseded. There was, therefore, nothing very remarkable or out of the way in the action of the Transvaal Government with regard to the Vaal River drift. The Cape Government, however, which was bent on breaking down, if possible, the independence of the Transvaal railway system, deemed itself aggrieved, and, on the advice of Mr. Schreiner, the Attorney-General in Mr. Rhodes' Ministry, influenced the Colonial Office to declare the closing of the drift a breach of the London Convention. Thereupon the proclamation was withdrawn, but a more utterly paltry matter was never made the subject of diplomatic intervention, and it may be taken for granted that the Cape Colony by this time bitterly repents of its folly in thus invoking the support of the Imperial Government. For it was this incident about the drift, coupled with the Jameson raid, that decided the Free State not only to decline all future partnership with the Cape Colony in railway matters—partnership very much to the Colony's advantage—but also to exercise its option of taking over, at cost price, the Free State section of the trunk line of railway between the Cape Colony and Johannesburg, the most profitable section of the whole system. The result of this step is that, whereas the Cape Government had been receiving a return of some 11 per cent.

on an original outlay of say two and a quarter millions, it cannot now reckon on more than 4 per cent. on that amount. Capitalised, the loss which the Cape Colony has suffered, by invoking the aid of the Imperial Government over the drifts question, is at least three millions, while not a single person has been benefited by so much as a six-pence.

Nevertheless, for the purpose of assisting to create a strong prejudice in England against the Transvaal Government, the incident was of service, and for that reason a Ministry of which Mr. Rhodes was the head no doubt regarded it as a good piece of business, by the side of which the loss caused to the Cape Colony was not to be taken into account. Events now began to move rapidly. Dr. Jameson and his police had been brought down to the vicinity of the Transvaal frontier, under pretext of taking over the Bechuanaland Protectorate. On the 20th of November, 1895, at a meeting of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines, Mr. Lionel Phillips, a member of the firm of Eckstein and Chairman of the Chamber, delivered a speech which was the signal-rocket to the different parties to the conspiracy. "Capital," Mr. Phillips declared, with a splendid audacity—for in August of the previous year he had himself suggested the arming of the gold-mining companies—"capital was always on the side of order." There was a limit to endurance, he went on, though there was nothing further from their desires than an upheaval, which would probably end in bloodshed. The terms of this speech naturally excited attention in Europe, and formed the subject, two or three weeks later, of a somewhat remarkable correspondence. The

parties to the correspondence were a gentleman, very well known in the Transvaal, living in Hamburg, and a member of a most exalted firm of financiers in London, who represented that firm on the directorate of De Beers.¹ A letter written from Hamburg on the 6th of December, after an allusion to the fact that South Africa was "the land of surprises," contained the following passage :—

"Master Lionel's speech has been very foolish, and is likely to do a great deal of harm and no good—unless his instructions are to incite to bloodshed—and I can scarcely imagine such instructions to have gone out while the boom was still lasting. If there is anything that is likely to put Paul Kruger's back up, it is threats ; and unless Cecil Rhodes is prepared to back up with his Matabeleland heroes those threats, you will find the Volksraad of 1896 give an unmistakable answer to what they will wrongly call 'British threats.'"

To this, on the 10th of December, the following reply was returned :—

"Your remark concerning Rhodes' Matabeleland heroes is probably more prophetic than you yourself are aware of. South Africa is, as you say, the land of surprises."

Nothing could be more significant. Although, according to Mr. Lionel Phillips, "capital is always on the side of order," nothing can be more clear than that the use that was to be made of Dr. Jameson and his force was known beforehand to London financiers of the very highest standing. Financiers do not engage in or encourage popular revolutions. For what object, then, were they interested in the speech of Mr. Lionel Phillips,

¹ The correspondence was published in a Hamburg paper early in January, 1896, and its existence and nature is well known to many persons in England.

and in the movements of Jameson's troopers? There seems to be only one answer possible, viz., that the amalgamation of mines which they had assisted at Kimberley, and which had proved so enormously profitable, was to be copied in Johannesburg.

By Saturday, the 14th of December, the full text of Mr. Lionel Phillips' speech had arrived in England by mail, and on Monday, the 16th of December, a second signal-rocket was sent up in the shape of a most significant, and, as regards the Transvaal, minatory article in the *Times*. Matters were now well on their way towards a consummation. The arms designed for the use of the Johannesburg revolutionists had been arriving there concealed in coal-trucks and oil-tanks, the agency of De Beers Company in Kimberley proving most serviceable. The date of the "day of flotation"—i.e., the breaking out of the revolutionary movement—was already being discussed, and the use to be made of the representatives of the British Government determined. On the 21st of December Colonel Rhodes, representing his brother, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, in Johannesburg, telegraphed to Capetown urging the necessity of the intervention of the High Commissioner at the earliest possible moment.¹ It was essential, it was pointed out, that Mr. Rhodes and the High Commissioner should leave Capetown for Johannesburg on the "day of flotation"—the day of the outbreak of the revolution. Many of the

¹ The word "chairman" in this telegram was at first taken to refer to Dr. Jameson. Internal evidence, however, besides the subsequent admissions of Johannesburg reformers, shows that the High Commissioner was meant. He had been "chairman" of the Standard Bank before his reappointment to the Cape.

"subscribers," it was stated by Colonel Rhodes, had "taken shares" on this assurance. The truth is, the reformers did not want to run the risk of too much fighting. They hoped to meet enough resistance to justify the despatch of alarming telegrams, descriptive of fighting in the streets of Johannesburg, but they had no desire whatever to risk their lives in a serious conflict with Transvaal burghers. They wanted to put the match to the bonfire, but they wanted also to be sure that the fire-brigade would be close at hand to put it out. That in the event of a collision in the streets of Johannesburg it would be the interest and duty of the High Commissioner to hurry up from Capetown in the guise of a mediator, they could pretty well guess, but they wanted to be sure. And thus, following a process which is not altogether strange to insurance companies, they insisted that the chief incendiary and the official fire-engine should hasten to the scene of the conflagration by the same train.

Meantime, however, the revolutionists in Johannesburg began to discover that they were not in agreement among themselves. What were they working for, or for whom? A suspicion crept round—and no doubt the suspicion was based on the vague and mysterious hints dropped, for the persuasion of unwilling recruits, of the interest taken in the movement by the Imperial Government—that the British flag was, in the event of Mr. Kruger's Government being overthrown, to be once more hoisted over the Transvaal. The prospect was distasteful for several reasons, the most cogent possibly being the consideration that in such an event the control of capital over the legislation of the country would be considerably limited. By

Christmas Day the division of feeling had become so marked that the great majority of the Johannesburg reformers decided to postpone all action until an assurance on this point had been received. Mr. Charles Leonard, the President of the National Union, hurried off to Capetown to consult Mr. Rhodes. Dr. Jameson, who had been in favour of immediate action, was warned from more than one quarter that he must on no account, until he received further orders, make any move. The position was an extraordinary one. In Johannesburg the revolutionary party were in a state of indecision and alarm. On the Transvaal frontier Dr. Jameson—the one man who seems to have had any ideas, however mistaken they were, above money-bags—was fretting and straining at his tether. In Capetown Mr. Rhodes was hesitating between an abandonment of his whole scheme, or pushing on with it in the face of the objections raised in Johannesburg.

Then, in the midst of all this uncertainty, on the night of the 29th of December, Dr. Jameson started. Why he started has been a matter of controversy. He has himself assumed the sole responsibility for his action, and it has been disowned by Mr. Rhodes. When a man, however, is burning to act, it is always possible to convey to him an order to act in the shape of a prohibition, and there seems to be evidence that only a few hours before starting Dr. Jameson received some kind of message or instructions from Captain Heany. There can, however, be little question that his action was no part of the original plan, even though his force was placed on the border to assist in a Johannesburg revolution. It is much more probable, if not certain, that his force was

intended to support the High Commissioner, and to have been moved down to Johannesburg on his orders, if, on the expected collision taking place in the streets of Johannesburg, Sir Hercules Robinson had hurried up there on an errand of mediation. The anticipated collision in Johannesburg, however, never took place. President Kruger, shrewdly penetrating the designs of the conspirators, and resolved to disappoint them, withdrew all the Transvaal police from the streets. However anxious the reformers might be to exchange shots with some hostile force, and thus raise a plea for British intervention, there was no one to oblige them.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more like original chaos than the state of Johannesburg during the last days of 1895 and the first days of 1896. With the doings of the would-be reformers the great bulk of the population had no sympathy whatever. The reform organisation was strictly confined within the walls of the Rand Club, the resort of speculators, financiers, brokers, and a certain percentage of professional men. All that the European population at large were aware of was that somehow, they scarcely knew how, a situation of imminent danger had been created, full of threat both to life and property. As was to be expected, the situation was made worse by the absence of any reliable news and the presence of innumerable and conflicting rumours. Was it true that Jameson was advancing upon Johannesburg? Was it true that the town was being surrounded by thousands of armed burghers? Was it true that a new Government had actually been proclaimed at the offices of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa? No one could tell for certain. What was plainly

visible was that the police had been withdrawn from the streets, and that arms were being distributed at the offices of the Consolidated Goldfields to men who, for the most part, had not the faintest idea how to use them. A sense of panic and dread of the worst seized upon the vast bulk of the population, the panic becoming greater when it leaked out that the principal actors in the revolutionary movement had quietly sent their families out of the country in advance. It would be impossible to sum up or even to estimate the amount of misery suffered during these days by innocent and peaceable people—by the women and children whose lives Dr. Jameson was to be called in to protect. The scenes at the railway station, where men and women fought for places in the departing trains—the men including numbers of miners who had been ordered by their capitalist employers to take up arms against the Government, and who had forfeited their wages rather than comply—were indescribable. The misery of departure was prolonged through the long journey to the Cape Colony or Natal, the misery culminating in tragedy when an overladen train left the rails and flung forty more victims, women and children for the most part, upon the sacrificial altar of Mr. Rhodes' speculations. Sympathy was a few weeks later expressed for the reformers who found themselves confined within the narrow limits of the Pretoria gaol. They were uncomfortable, no doubt. But if there remained with them any sense of moral justice, they might well have regarded their discomfort as some slight atonement for the misery they had brought to hundreds of homes, and for the lives thrown away in the accident on the Natal railway.

In the meantime the rudderless and water-logged revolution drifted about vaguely in the streets. There was no head, no counsel, no plan of action. A section of the revolutionists went to Pretoria, in a frame of mind alternating between panic and bluster, to endeavour to make terms with the Government. The severing of the telegraph wires by Jameson's orders had deprived both his friends and his foes of any precise knowledge of his movements. The report, however, spread about that he was coming. Was he wanted or was he not wanted? Half the reformers said "Yes;" half of them said "No." A semi-military member of the committee of the National Union made a feeble attempt to lead out a hundred men to co-operate with the invader, only to be stopped and taken prisoners without firing a shot. Where was Jameson? On Wednesday, the 1st of January, 1896, he was endeavouring to force a way through the few hundred burghers who, leaving their homes in haste, were holding a position a little to the westward of Krugersdorp. The next day, after making a detour to the south, he was hopelessly surrounded near Doornkop. There, in the enclosure by a farmhouse, he and his officers and men went through the bitter experience of surrender. The revolution was at an end.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHAT IS TO FOLLOW ?

THERE is no need to describe at any length the events that followed on the surrender at Doornkop. The circumstances that led up to that surrender are of more importance than the events by which it has been succeeded. The situation was then made. Most of what has happened and what has been said since represents rather a series of endeavours either to explain the situation or to distort it. Among these events may be included (1) the German Emperor's message to President Kruger, (2) Mr. Chamberlain's famous despatch, (3) President Kruger's practical declining for the present of the invitation to visit England, (4) the Matabele rebellion, (5) the trial of the Johannesburg reformers, (6) the trial of Dr. Jameson and his officers, and (7) the endeavours made by Mr. Rhodes to influence public feeling in England in his favour and to intimidate the parliamentary committee.

With regard to the German Emperor's message it may be doubted whether any honest person has inwardly any doubt as to its real value—that it was a congratulatory message sent without any *arrière pensée*, though perhaps a little officiously, to the head of a State in which Germany has, without

doubt, important commercial interests. That it was in any respect directed against Great Britain cannot with any reason be held, for the attempt on the independence of the Transvaal to which the message alluded had been already expressly repudiated by Great Britain. Nevertheless, it may be admitted that if the German Emperor had wished to do the Transvaal Government an injury and Mr. Rhodes a service, he could not have done better than send that telegram. It has given the friends of Mr. Rhodes and the enemies of the South African Republic the best means they could possibly have desired for attracting attention away from the real points at issue, and for inflaming public feeling against the Transvaal Government by accusing it of a desire to give Germany the place of a rival with England in the South African Continent. There is probably no responsible statesman in Great Britain who believes this, or ever has believed it. The cry of "Germany!" however, has been useful for newspaper purposes, and has kept the public from studying the South African situation with the requisite amount of impartiality.

What may be said frankly is (1) that the Transvaal Government, owing to a condition of things already described, has sought to strengthen a position of defence against the attacks of Mr. Rhodes and the Chartered Company—not against the British Government—by seeking the moral support of European Powers with whom, subject to the absence of any objection within a given time by the British Government, it is perfectly at liberty to make treaties, and (2) that in all probability even this would not have happened had British interests for the last six years been as adequately represented at Pretoria as they

are now. It has been altogether an error, and a cruel error, to accuse the ex-British Agent, Sir Jacobus de Wet, of a special sympathy with the Transvaal Government. His feelings were in most cases quite the other way. But he was utterly untrained in diplomacy, and inexperienced in any large manner of dealing with the matters he had to handle, nor did he occupy that position of a *persona grata* which is associated with the very first letters of the diplomatic alphabet. The German Consul-General in Pretoria, on the other hand, has been a man who thoroughly understood his business. If the new representative of Great Britain at Pretoria fulfils the expectations that have been formed with regard to him, there can be little doubt that British interests in the Transvaal will be represented in a manner commensurate with their importance. Meantime it may be said—and to say it once should be as effective as saying it twenty times—that there can be no greater delusion than that which is associated with the belief in the dominating influence of what has been called a “Hollandic-German” party in Pretoria. The only Hollander of any eminence and influence in Pretoria, as has been said before, is the State Secretary, Dr. Leyds. He is one of six in an Executive the other members of which are all South African born, and who certainly would never allow themselves to be blindly led by the youngest member of their body. Indeed, the one thing that would militate against Dr. Leyds’ prospect of re-election to office more than anything else would be the suspicion that he was scheming to bring the Republic under any kind of protectorate, German, British, or any other. A great deal of the complaint about the influence of Hollanders in Pretoria is kept up from

Capetown, where, for some reason which it is not very easy to understand, all important public offices in the Transvaal are held to be the lawful spoil of Cape politicians, and this in spite of the fact that the Cape Colony itself, when occasion arises, imports its own officials from Scotland, from Holland, and from anywhere else that may be convenient.

As regards Mr. Chamberlain's despatch of the 4th of February, 1896, in which suggestions were made for the future government of Johannesburg, it has been withdrawn, having been received with disfavour by the foreign population which it was doubtless sincerely intended to benefit. Why was it received with disfavour ? Because if the plan it recommended had been carried out every interest in Johannesburg would have been made completely subject to the dictation of the same group of capitalists who, by means of an organised system of intimidation and corruption, have destroyed political liberty and political life in Kimberley. Under the Government of President Kruger the foreign population of Johannesburg enjoy as much liberty, barring a franchise which they do not care to obtain at the sacrifice of their nationality, as they want. Under the rule of the capitalists they would enjoy none. The treatment by the capitalists of the miners whom it sought to force into rebellion should be sufficient proof of this.

As regards President Kruger's proposed visit to England, there will probably now be very few people who are not convinced that, if he had visited England early in 1896, very little good could have resulted, and possibly a good deal of harm. The situation was not one to be hurried. As for the unhappy Matabeleland rebellion, there can be little

doubt that this has been the result of the removing of the police for a speculative invasion of the Transvaal, the introduction of a system of forced native labour, and—this is not to be disregarded—the existence of a belief among natives of a division of the European population of South Africa against itself. The trials of the Johannesburg reformers and the sentences passed upon them have been made the subject of not a little adverse criticism of the Transvaal Government and of the judge who presided at those trials. It has not been sufficiently borne in mind that Mr. Justice Gregorowski, who previously held the post of State-Attorney in the Orange Free State, is a member of the English Bar and a man of high integrity and intelligence, who was specially appointed to the Transvaal Bench with the view of avoiding any appearance of unfairness. As for the death sentences, which for the moment shocked English feeling, they were inevitable in the case of defendants who had pleaded guilty to a capital charge, while the delay in formally commuting them arose from the opposition of a member of the Executive, who has, it is instructive to notice, been regarded as the hope of a progressive party in the Transvaal. That they have left no sting behind them is proved by the fact that one of the four recipients of the death sentences — Mr. George Farrar—has since been on terms of friendly intercourse with President Kruger, and has been appointed by the Transvaal Government a member of the School Board for the management in Johannesburg of State-aided schools for the education of the children of foreign residents.

Regarding the Jameson trial there is little or nothing to be said. The manifest efforts made by

Mr. Rhodes, however, to reinstate himself in favour in this country, or at least to produce the impression that he is too powerful in South Africa to be lightly meddled with, is a more serious matter, and leads up directly to the question, What is to follow upon the defeat of the attempt on the independence of the South African Republic ?

There is one thing that might be done. Misled by the theatrical demonstrations ¹ in one or two Cape Colony centres in Mr. Rhodes' favour, and overawed by the influence of the aristocratic party who have been enabled to make money out of his adventures, the nation might permit Mr. Rhodes to resume the position of a South African dictator, and send him out to South Africa again as the one man upon whom it has pinned its faith for the solution of a complicated problem in a little-understood country. This is possible ; there seem to be those who are desirous of making it probable. What then ? It may reasonably be said that for a community to pin its faith for the solution of a complicated problem in a little-understood country upon one man of uncertain health would be madness, even if that man were possessed of the whole catalogue of human virtues. It may reasonably be said that when a man is regarded by some three-quarters of the European population of that country,

¹ It would seem that the demonstrations in Capetown, at least, were organised by the "South African League," an avowedly anti-Dutch association which only a month or two previously was strongly condemned by Cape Colony journals inspired by Mr. Rhodes. The "South African League," which appears to be a revival of the abortive "Empire League" of 1884, is in close sympathy with the "South African Association" in England—an organisation that busies itself in keeping alive the lingering prejudice in this country against the Dutch race in South Africa.

including a multitude of loyal British subjects, as an unpunished conspirator against the peace of South Africa, such an act would be a crime.

It is possible that that crime may be committed. If it is, the misfortunes that will follow will be appalling. The whole peace of South Africa will hang by a thread. Irritation and suspicion will infest every corner. Race-enmities will be awakened, which will play into the hands of barbarism, and will infallibly lead up, sooner or later, to one of the most terrible and desolating wars of modern times. These men whom you call "Boers," whom you deride for their surface failings, are not men who can lightly be dispossessed of their independence. They have their faults, no doubt; but put them in the position of having to fight for their independence, and they will display all the endurance and valour of those whose descendants they are—the Huguenots who sacrificed everything for the sake of freedom of thought and religion; the Netherlanders who successfully stood out against the forces of the greatest European power of the sixteenth century. In the Transvaal, in the Free State, in the Cape Colony, in Natal, these men, who constitute the dominant factor in South Africa, are to be found, bound together by those subtle ties of blood and nationality which survive accumulated oppressions and the flight of years. The cause of one, when it comes to extremes, is the cause of all; and if they see the man whom they regard as an unpunished malefactor visibly supported by the British Government, it will be against the British Government that they will range themselves in sullen hatred or in open defiance. It is possible that this may happen, and if it happens, either the

whole structure of civilisation in South Africa will be wiped out, or South Africa will cease to form in any respect a portion of the British Empire.

There is an alternative course—a simple one.

Go back to the situation that existed in 1887, when, after various tossings to and fro, it came to be at last understood that it was best to leave South Africa alone, and allow its own natural forces—the loyalty of the Colonies, the goodwill of the Republics, the enterprise of the Briton, the endurance of the Boer—to work out their own natural result. Realise that these men, the descendants of the Huguenot and the Hollander, are your natural friends, that they wish Great Britain well,^{*} that they recognise the importance of the British stake in the country, that, far from helping other European Powers to get into South Africa, they will, if fairly dealt with, assist England, if necessary, in keeping other European Powers out. There is nothing difficult in this. It only means a getting rid of delusions which, after all, are the growth of the last few years, and a realising of facts that have only been somewhat overclouded by the smoke from the speculator's furnace. Just apply to the study of things South African the patience and intelligence that you apply to political problems elsewhere, and the result will astonish you. But in the meantime do not expect impossibilities.

^{*} It has sometimes been asserted that Transvaal burghers are infected with the idea that they wrested their independence from Great Britain by mere force. This notion is contradicted by the words of the Transvaal Volkslied. Thus :—

“ Knowst thou that land, in years a child,
 ‘Mid realms of high degree,
On which the might of Britain smiled
When rang those words ‘ Be free ! ’ ”

You will not, for example, get a confederated South Africa under the British flag. That will not come of itself, and if you attempt to force it the attempt will be extinguished in oceans of bloodshed. Do not, either, entertain the idea that any kind of federated government will ever meet in Capetown. Both on geographical and political grounds that is impossible. Nevertheless, there is much to be done to render South Africa more united, and the chief thing to be done is to leave it alone. So long as it is known that the Imperial Government is ready to interfere at any moment, so long will there be schemers in South Africa, large and small, who will seek to create occasions for interference. Even the meanest morsel of humanity may aspire to twist the lion's tail.

Do one thing more. Get to know the men of South Africa — the men who, belonging to the country, are trusted and looked up to—for themselves; not for their money—by the people of the country, and who represent its best possibilities. You bring home insignificant native chiefs and entertain them as if they were princes; you crowd round huge fungoid growths from the corruption of the Stock Exchange and worship them as if they were gods, while the real men of the country are passed by as though they did not exist. Here is an instance, and a typical one. Not long ago Mr. Reitz, who was then President of the Orange Free State, paid a visit to Europe. He was officially in the position of the head of a Sovereign State; personally he is a man who would be an ornament to any civilisation under the sun. When visiting Holland, he was met on equal terms by the Queen. When visiting Belgium, he was met on equal terms by the

King. When visiting France, he was met on equal terms by the President. In England he might have driven all over London in a cab, and no one would have been any the wiser. And yet if there is any one country in the world whose interest it is to understand and to appreciate the men who are appreciated in South Africa, that country is Great Britain.

There is nothing difficult about the task of making Great Britain the Paramount Power in South Africa with the goodwill and acceptance of every soul in that great country. It is as easy as washing in Jordan. Let the Paramount Power, without neglecting any other interest—there is no need for that—make friends with the Dominant Factor. The position of Paramount Power will then be worth having.

THE END.

